

Luke's Gospel

Chapters 18:1 – 21:38



Volume 5

About the cover.

I am very grateful to my dear friend Christine “Chris” Eaves, who has given her time and skill to producing the covers for the 6 Volumes of Luke’s Gospel. The covers show the gradual revelation of Jesus, as you progress from a closed door, to an open door, revealing the Saviour. The covers are a sermon in their own right.

About the artist.

Chris has always been interested in photography. For many years, she sold artwork in local galleries and used photography just as a reference. Gradually though, and with the introduction of digital cameras, the photography became more important than painting.

Chris lives in Weymouth on the South Coast of the UK and works right opposite Weymouth Beach, which presents many opportunities for photography and the light is constantly changing. A few years ago she won a national photography magazine competition and the prize was a Canon 450D.

In Autumn, 2011, Chris was one of the 12 finalists (out of 55,000 entries) in the BBC TV's Country file Calendar Competition. “This has given me great spur to push on in this fantastic world of photography. This is a wonderful world and there is so much that I'd love to do, and yet, it seems that time here is so short. I try not to waste a moment!”

A devout Christian, Chris uses her talent to provide devotionals from nature, calendars, linking Scriptures with pictures, to inspire other Christians to look with a discerning eye on the Creator of the Universe, Jesus Christ.

Please visit Chris’s website when you have a moment.
<https://www.chriseavesphotography.co.uk/>

Dedication

This 6 Volume series comprise the ministries given between **October 2021** and **March 2024**.

To those who sat through these ministries, I thank you for your encouragement to me and I hope you too have been encouraged.

Thanks to my amanuensis Shelley for her continual encouragement to get this book published and her gracious correction, suggestions and support to me.

My gratitude goes also to my wife Diana who has encouraged my recovery and been a source of strength, inspiration and love. She has always been there for me, physically and spiritually, on my path back from a stroke.

Love in Jesus,

Mike 24th August 2024

P.S. Do contact me with any queries michael.winnett@ntlworld.com

Where a Bible version is not stated it is the Authorised Version, otherwise:

- CEV Contemporary English Version
- Darby John Nelson Darby Translation
- ERV Easy to Read Version
- Geneva 1587 Version
- GNB Good News Translation
- GW God's Word
- ISV International Standard Version
- KJV Kings James Version
- LEB Lexham English Version
- LITV Literal Translation of the Holy Bible
- LXX Septuagint
- RSV Revised Standard Version
- YLT Young's Literal Translation

Scripture quotations are in ***italic script***. All versions can be found in e-Sword. e-Sword is a fast, effective and free way to study the Bible. e-Sword is feature rich and user friendly with more capabilities than you would expect in a free Bible study app. Blessings upon Rick Meyers for e-Sword <http://www.e-sword.net/>
Please send him a co

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153. Will there be Faith on Earth? *Luke 18: 1 - 8*

Luk 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Luk 18:2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: Luk 18:3 And there was a widow in that

city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. Luk 18:4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Luk 18:5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. Luk 18:6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. Luk 18:7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? Luk 18:8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

I suppose the disciples had got fed up with being down trodden and they also felt that their prayer was not very effective, because they had already asked for help in praying, *Luk 11:1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.* Earlier (Luke 9), the disciples appear to be rebuked for their inability to pray aright, *Mat 17:20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Mat 17:21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*

Prayer isn't an easy task and it seems most of our requests are like paper notes that are sent up a chimney, they just get burned up without a trace, and as a result we just might find ourselves giving up any hope of an answer. We begin to think that there is no one listening or if He is listening He ignores us and just does not bother to answer us. But you could hardly mention the subject of prayer without a reference to George Muller and you have to ask why this man of prayer had so many answers so quickly? Here is his answer,

Mr Mueller stated that he believed that the Lord had given him more than thirty thousand souls in answer to prayer and that not only from among orphans, but also many others for whom he (in some cases for fifty years) had prayed faithfully every day, in the firm faith that they would be saved. When he was asked on what ground he so firmly believed this, his answer was: 'There are five conditions which I always endeavour to fulfil, in observing which I have the assurance of answer to my prayer:

1. I have not the least doubt because I am assured that it is the Lord's will to save them, for he willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (see 1 Tim. 2.4); and we have the assurance 'that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us' (1 John 5.14).

2. I have never pleaded for their salvation in my own name, but in the blessed name of my precious Lord Jesus, and on his merits alone (see John 14.14).
3. I always firmly believed in the willingness of God to hear my prayers (see Mark 11.24).
4. I am not conscious of having yielded to any sin, for 'if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me' when I call (Ps. 66.18).
5. I have persevered in believing prayer for more than fifty two years for some, and shall continue till the answer comes: 'Shall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him?' (Luke 18.7).

Take these thoughts into your hearts and practice prayer according to these rules. Let prayer be not only the utterance of your desires, but a fellowship with God, till we know by faith that our prayer is heard. The way George Mueller walked is the new and living way to the throne of grace, which is open for us all.

We tend to use examples such as that to encourage believers to pray and that gives us comfort that prayers, somewhere, are having an effect, even though mine do not, and there it is. I just have to live with the fact that although I pray, I just cannot master the subject, and I pray out of duty, not out of faith, and that is wrong.

George Muller seems to have had a formula, but I detect in that formula, an attitude to prayer. It is pointless praying if you do not think God will answer prayer, and it is pointless praying contrary to God's will. Taking those two points in mind, God is a God who answers prayer. What is not known so well is that George Mueller had a much longer wait to see some people saved. He began to pray for five people to come to faith in Jesus. "'I prayed every day without a single intermission,' he wrote, 'whether sick or in health, on the land, on the sea, and whatever the pressure of my engagements might be. Eighteen months elapsed before the first of the five was converted. I thanked God and prayed on for the others. Five years elapsed, and then the second was converted. I thanked God... and prayed on for the other three. Day by day, I continued to pray for them, and six years passed before the third was converted. I thanked God... and went on praying for the other two.'"

Thirty-six years later, Mueller said, 'I hope in God, I pray on, and look for the answer. They are not converted yet, but they will be.' Fifty-two years after George Mueller began to pray, the last two men came to faith.... after Mueller's death!

Jesus encourages us to pray with a parable about a judge who didn't fear what man said or what God said, so I suppose that judge was an godless independent man and made his own choices, but they were not necessarily right according to law. Jesus calls the man an unrighteous judge, a crooked judge. In that same place that he lived, there was a widow who had a lawsuit against someone and it needed settling, but the judge did nothing about it, *Luk 18:2 In a town there was once a judge who didn't fear God or care about people. Luk 18:3 In that same town there was a widow who kept going to the judge and saying, "Make sure that I get fair treatment in court."* CEV.

The crooked judge just sat on his thumbs and let it go, refusing to act upon her plea, and this went on for a while, her complaining, him doing nothing. I suppose you would call him a "jobsworth" for the inexcusable way he treated people. But the widow kept on at him, like your children do, asking for an ice cream, "can I have an ice cream", "No", "can I have an ice cream", "No", "can I have an ice cream", "No". Then out of exasperation you say, "Yes!" *Luk 18:4 For a while the judge refused to do anything. Finally, he said to himself, "Even though I don't fear God or care about people, Luk 18:5 I will help this widow because she keeps on bothering me. If I don't help her, she will wear me out."* CEV.

It wasn't a question of right and wrong which settled the case, or justice, because the crooked judge didn't care much for that and it wasn't because her plea had changed his mind about the case or the law, it was because he was sick and tired of her continual moaning, as Proverbs says, *Pro 27:15 The steady dripping of rain and the nagging of a wife are one and the same.* The judge eventually did something about it and we gather the widow was satisfied because we hear no more about her complaining.

Now, says Jesus, listen carefully to what I am going to say, do you hear what that unjust judge says, he says, *"If I don't help her, she will wear me out."* He will not put up with it, he will be spurred to act, *Luk 18:6 The Lord said: Think about what that crooked judge said.* Why is he saying this? It is because if somebody who is unjust, with no care for the rule of law, not bothered about anyone, acts to resolve an issue, then what do you think that a just God will do facing a similar situation? It is quite obvious, *Luk 18:7 Won't God protect his chosen ones who pray to him day and night? Won't he be concerned for them? Luk 18:8 He will surely hurry and help them.....*

There is the thought, that if this unrighteous judge, who does not care for anyone or anything, will be moved to action by the persistent request of a widow, then how much more will your heavenly Father do right by you. That is a lot of prayer requests from the whole world, millions of prayers per second, billions per week,

all mounting up, some frivolous, some utterly selfish, some heartbreaking, all being sifted and weighed up. No wonder they don't all get answered straightaway, after all you might be 680,164th in the queue. Don't hang up, keep on the line and don't weary, *Luk 18:1 men ought always to pray, and not to faint;*

This parable tells us that God will hear His people, the elect, and He will judge favourably. I do not think that He means "revenge" because the widow woman was just crying out for some justice in her case against her adversary, not that she was after inflicting some injury on him, so it is crying out for an answer which is "just". Revenge is too strong a word, *Luk 18:7 Now, will God not judge in favor of his own people who cry to him day and night for help? Will he be slow to help them? Luk 18:8 I tell you, he will judge in their favor and do it quickly. But will the Son of Man find faith on earth when he comes?"* GNB.

This conclusion has considerably narrowed the scope of the type prayer that Jesus is talking about, and I suggest He is speaking of the righting wrongs, inequity, injustice, unrighteousness, the things which are abhorrent to God and cry out for a verdict. The widow had a just cause, it was blocked by a crooked judge, she persisted and gets the answer. If we go to the Great Judge, and we have a case, the Great Judge God Almighty will answer it. We might like to extend it to prayer for all manner of things and that may be included, but I think we are primarily talking of injustice and that is why the Lord invokes the image of the Judge, and going back to the time of Abraham when he intercedes for Sodom, he does just that, pleads for justice, *Gen 18:25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

It is encouraging the disciples, and us, that in an unjust world, where the weakest is nobody with man, but one of God's somebodies, you can get justice, *Exo 22:22 Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. Exo 22:23 If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; Exo 22:24 And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.*

We are surrounded by injustice. We have a government where you can be a brazen crook and stare down the camera and deny it. We have so many unjust wars where a mother's son is sucked into a meat grinder to satisfy the vanity of a megalomaniac. We have false news and crooked behaviour all framed in the words, "its my truth", and certainly not God's. Even a president of the united states, said, "there will be no whitewash at the white house", while hiding the

brush behind him and lying through his teeth. Yesterday in a paper, a female Met officer warned, 'I wouldn't report my own rape' and that sex crime 'might as well be legal' in London, in wake of the damning Met Police dossier. We have been so long in the devils world that these things are normal to us, and we no longer see them for what they are.

That is what we should be concerned with, Divine justice, and we should cry out for it. Not the petty injustices and squabbles over things which are personal choices, but the bigger issues, *Luk 11:42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and **pass over judgment and the love of God**: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.* We are too concerned for self and until we get a sense of the injustice that is done to God, we will not be praying correctly.

The early disciples had the sense of this when they cried, *Act 4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, Act 4:30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. Act 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*

The saints cry for justice, *Rev 6:9 Then the Lamb broke open the fifth seal. I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been killed because they had proclaimed God's word and had been faithful in their witnessing. Rev 6:10 They shouted in a loud voice, "Almighty Lord, holy and true! How long will it be until you judge the people on earth and punish them for killing us?" Rev 6:11 Each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to rest a little while longer, until the complete number of other servants and believers were killed, as they had been.* GNB.

This is the direction that Jesus is getting us to pray in, to pray God for Justice, to honour His word, *Pro 11:21 You can be sure of this: **All crooks will be punished**, but God's people won't.* CEV. The Lord has a final thought for the hearers, " *Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*" Dr Gill has an observation from 200 years ago,

shall he find faith on the earth? either in the land of Judea, the believers being removed from thence, and scattered among the Gentiles, and not a man, at least in Jerusalem, that had any faith in Jesus, as the Messiah; or in the world at the last day: there will then be little of the doctrine of faith, and less of the grace of faith, and still less

of the exercise of faith, particularly in prayer, and especially about the coming of Christ; it will be little thought of, and expected, or faith little exercised about it.

Will they have lost their faith because they have lost their commitment? They are not concerned about what is right anymore having been bathing in the sewer of the world so long, they take it as normal. I know many Christians who are of this mind and they are not at all vexed by the conduct of the world. They do not pray about it, care about it, and are serving time in it, in the hope that after having exhausted its pleasures God will welcome them with open arms. That is wishful thinking!

Those people make out that Lot was somehow engaged in and encouraging the life in Sodom. It makes them feel better about their own sin, it makes them feel comfortable to have a great saint brought down to the dunghill. But read your Scripture carefully, what does it say, *2Pe 2:7 And delivered **just Lot**, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 2Pe 2:8 (For **that righteous man dwelling among them**, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)* That man Lot was deeply troubled by what was going on, and this version brings it out, *2Pe 2:7 He rescued Lot, a good man, who was distressed by the immoral conduct of lawless people. 2Pe 2:8 That good man lived among them, and day after day **he suffered agony as he saw and heard their evil actions**.* GNB.

If you do not see the world with Lot's eyes, if you are not suffering in agony as you see the evil actions going on around you, what conclusion can you draw? Either I am lying to you or you are not worried because you are not Christ's, and you are part of the faithless end time generation. Which one is true?

154. Pharisaic Prayer *Luke 18: 9 - 14*

Luk 18:9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Luk 18:10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. Luk 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. Luk 18:12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. Luk 18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. Luk 18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

This is another prayer but it focuses on the nature of the individual prayer in terms of who is praying, in this case a Pharisee and a Publican. The prayer of the Pharisee, reminded me of the almost Churchillian satirical political speech that Peter Sellers, the comedian, gave in 1958,

My friends, in the light of present-day developments, let me say right away, that I do not regard existing conditions lightly. On the contrary, I have always regarded them as subjects of the gravest responsibility, and shall ever continue to do so. Indeed I will even go further and state, quite categorically, that I'm more than sensible of the definition of the precise issues which are, at this very moment, concerning us all. We must build, but we *must build surely!* [*A smattering of applause and a languid cry of 'Hear hear'.*] Let me say just this. If any part of what I am saying is challenged, then I am more than ready to meet such a challenge. For I've no doubt whatsoever, that whatever I may have said in the past, or what I am saying now is, as to the state of the case, the exact, literal and absolute truth. [*Another smattering and two or three assorted cries of 'Hear, hear'.*] I put it to you that this is not the time for vague promises of better things to come. [*A muffled 'yerse' from a member of the audience*] For if I were to convey to you a spirit of false optimism, then I should be neither fair to you, nor true to myself. But does this mean, I hear you cry, that we can no longer look forward to the future that is to come? *Certainly not!*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boHK5YelZfo>

He talks a “good game” but in fact he has said absolutely nothing of consequence. He is, to use a phrase, bloviating. Warren G. Harding is often linked to *bloviate*, but to him the word wasn't insulting; it simply meant "to spend time idly." Harding used the word often in that "hanging around" sense, but during his tenure as the 29th U.S. President (1921-23), he became associated with the "verbose" sense of *bloviate*, perhaps because his speeches tended to the long-winded side. Although he is sometimes credited with having coined the word, it's more likely that Harding picked it up from local slang while hanging around with his boyhood buddies in Ohio in the late 1800s. The term probably derives from a combination of the word blow plus the suffix -ate. E.E. Cummings eulogized him as "The only man, woman or child who wrote a simple declarative sentence with seven grammatical errors".

The Pharisees prayer is like that political address, saying nothing and more importantly, requesting nothing. You may wonder if this is so, why bother to pray to yourself, and why bother praying at all? But that is how some people pray, and they sit there in prayer meetings and say whatever comes into their head, just so

they can be seen to “pray” and make a show or they just pray because it is the done thing and they pray because of others, but there is no conviction in them to pray at all, but pray they do. There is no preparation of the subject matter that is going to be delivered to the Most High God. People would take more time and make more effort when they appeared before a worldly ruler.

The Pharisee is such as this, praying for nothing from God, asking nought, but declaring what sort of man he is, his “truth”. He is going up to the Temple to tell God what a good fellow he is, how righteous he is, *"God, I thank you that I am not greedy, dishonest, and unfaithful in marriage like other people. And I am really glad that I am not like that tax collector over there. I go without eating for two days a week, and I give you one tenth of all I earn."*

One wonders about his “god”, what concept he holds, because this is not how I have learned about God,. *Psa 139:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Psa 139:2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Psa 139:3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. Psa 139:4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Psa 139:5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Psa 139:6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Psa 139:7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?* This is a God who knows what you say before you do and should be treated with humility.

The Pharisees “god” is like Isaiah’s description of an idol, *Isa 44:15 Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, **he maketh a god, and worshippeth it**; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. Isa 44:16 He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: Isa 44:17 And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. Isa 44:18 They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.*

The “god” he has manufactured out of the same piece of wood that he uses for cooking, he speaks to it and prays to it. It is a monologue, an empty speech, because no one is listening to him, just his little piece of firewood, without ears to hear, and eyes to see, that he uses also for cooking. Is your God like that stupid piece of wood, carved into any shape that you want, made by your hands and

worshipped by the same hands? O no, you cry, it is not, I don't make my God, I worship the God who made the Heavens and the earth. So the God you worship, the Creator God is Jesus? No, then you, the JW's, the Mormons, and anyone else who doesn't think Jesus is Creator, is bowing down to a false God. Is the virgin birth of Christ a fact, is His death real, is His resurrection a reality? No, or not sure, then you too can join the others who have a false God. Is your "god" all love, his kingdom embracing all manner of deviants and crooks, who he will forgive and welcome into his home, although they do no repent, then that is not my God and that is not my Lord and we are at odds with our view of God.

A false view of God leads to a false God, *Exo 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Exo 20:4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Exo 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;* Trying to humanise God, trying to make of Him something which He is not, is a punishable offence.

Well if that is so, I must be wrong to even conceive of a God, since I am not to make a likeness of Him. The moment I think of Him, I am breaking this law, because I am manufacturing His likeness albeit in my thoughts. The Jews were so afraid of this misuse of God's name that they did not say Jehovah = יהוה but said Adoni = אדני which is Lord, instead. But I think that this is the basis of the command for "not making God to be something that He is not". *Rom 1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, Rom 1:23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Rom 1:24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.*

When Jesus said, *Mat 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Mat 7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? Mat 7:23 **And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*** He is also saying that you never knew Him. You had an idea that God was all about doing things, works, casting out devils, prophesying, doing miracles, and that somehow makes you acceptable to Him. We have become like that Pharisee who went to the Temple and prayed to Himself.

He, the great Pharisee, for all his religiosity, did not understand God or who He was, and in consequence he had a false “god”. He had thought that He was right, and that he knew God, and did godly things, but more importantly, God did not know him. And importantly for us too, does God know us? We can be immersed in the things which we think make Christianity, but they do not bring us to God. Hear O Israel, *Deu 6:1 'And this is the command, the statutes and the judgments which Jehovah your God hath commanded to teach you, to do in the land which ye are passing over thither to possess it, Deu 6:2 so that thou dost fear Jehovah thy God, to keep all His statutes and His commands, which I am commanding thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all days of thy life, and so that thy days are prolonged. Deu 6:3 'And thou hast heard, O Israel, and observed to do, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest multiply exceedingly, as Jehovah, God of thy fathers, hath spoken to thee, in the land flowing with milk and honey. Deu 6:4 'Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah; YLT.*

If you are to be known by Jesus, then you will do “*the will of my Father which is in heaven*”, you will have the same spiritual DNA as Jesus, you will follow the same teaching as Jesus, hold to the same manner of Worship, hold to the same beliefs as Jesus, reject that which cannot be proven true by God’s word, and be growing in grace and the knowledge of our Saviour Jesus.

Somebody recently sent me a petition to sign from the CoE evangelical council, CEEC, here is part of what it said,

As those who hold to the historic position of the Church, we in CEEC have found ourselves challenged about our past attitudes, the hurt that we have sometimes caused to LGBTQI+ people, and how we might become more **biblically inclusive**. We therefore are grateful for much in the bishops’ pastoral letter. We agree the church must value LGBTQI+ people and **be a place where everyone is welcome** and we too apologise and repent for the times we have failed and continue to fail to love them as God loves them.

That is just what I am talking about. It is an alien gospel from the sewer. You can love people without signing a petition, but you cannot be inclusive to “LGBTQI+ people” any more than you can be inclusive to murderers, adulterers, effeminate, and so on, *1Co 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 1Co 6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.* The Bible is certainly not “**biblically inclusive**”. And

as for admitting liability for a distant past, am I going to be held accountable for what my father did, in a war before I was born. No way.

The “church” most emphatically is not a place where everyone is welcome, *2Co 6:14 Stay away from people who are not followers of the Lord! Can someone who is good get along with someone who is evil? Are light and darkness the same? 2Co 6:15 Is Christ a friend of Satan? Can people who follow the Lord have anything in common with those who don't?* CEV. But the CoE belief system is not founded upon Scripture, therefore we do not have the same God as them. We do not have the same God as the Pharisee, although he might seem to be religious.

The other man who went to the Temple to pray, had a petition that was valid and he did not take it to men, as if that would change anything, but he took it to the God of the Bible. The God who shows mercy to the sinner, *Mat 9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* The man invoked the very nature of God in his cause, he looked for what God had said of Himself and asked for that thing. The man had one request, *Luk 18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, **God be merciful to me a sinner.*** The self-confessed sinner is forgiven, the pompous Pharisee is not, One man explained himself to men one went to God found the answer.

One man lifted himself up, to be admired for what he thought he was, the other man fell down and asked for mercy, *Luk 18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* That's religion in a nutshell.

155. You should be Children *Luke 18: 15 - 17*

Luk 18:15 And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. Luk 18:16 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Luk 18:17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

The word “infant” βρέφος, is a baby or even the unborn, *Luk 1:41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, her **baby** moved within her. The Holy Spirit came upon Elizabeth.* This word is used interchangeably with “little child”, παιδίον, *Mat 2:14 When he arose, he took the **young child** and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt.* We are dealing with the very young, possibly babes in arms, and of that there is no doubt.

There are other verses which bear on this incident, *Mat 19:13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and **pray**: and the disciples rebuked them. Mat 19:14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Mat 19:15 And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.....Mar 10:13 And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. Mar 10:14 But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Mar 10:15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. Mar 10:16 And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and **blessed** them.*

We learn from these verses, that Jesus prayed over the little ones and blessed, or **eulogised** them. The term εὐλογέω means to say a benediction upon them. This was quite a normal practice, for example, Simeon does the same for the baby Jesus, *Luk 2:26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Luk 2:27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Luk 2:28 **Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God**, and said:* Again, he eulogises over the child.

Are babies brought into the kingdom or not? Jesus says that you must receive the Kingdom of God as a child or you will not enter in. He does not say all children will enter but that the manner of receiving the Kingdom is childlike but not childish.

The catholic position on this subject, given from their own words, from the website “Catholic Answers” says,

The New Testament itself, while it does not explicitly say when (or whether) believers should have their children baptized, is not silent on the subject (sic!). Luke 18:15–16 tells us that “they were bringing even infants” to Jesus; and he himself related this to the kingdom of God:

“Let the children come to me . . . for to such belongs the kingdom of God.”

When Baptists speak of “bringing someone to Jesus,” they mean leading him to faith. But Jesus says “even infants” can be “brought” to him. Even Baptists don’t claim their practice of “dedicating” babies does this. The fact is, the Bible gives us no way of bringing anyone to Jesus apart from baptism.

Using the Baptists as an example is not relevant, the Scripture is relevant. That is diabolical exegesis, in fact it is reading into a Scripture what is not there and is in consequence adding to Scripture. This line of thinking is eruditely destroyed by Charles Spurgeon who preached a sermon, “Children Brought to Christ and Not to the Font”, on July 24th 1864, when he was 30 years old,

It is very clear, Dear Friends, that these young children were **not** brought to Jesus Christ by their friends to be baptized. "They brought young children to him, that he should touch them," says Mark. Matthew describes the children as being brought "that he would put his hands on them and pray," but there is not a hint about their being baptized; no godfathers or godmothers had been provided, and no sign of the cross was requested. Surely the parents themselves knew tolerably well what it was they desired, and they would not have expressed themselves so dubiously as to ask him to touch them, when they meant that he should baptize them. The parents evidently had no thought of regeneration by baptism, and brought the children for quite another end.

In the next place, if they brought the children to Jesus Christ to be baptized, they brought them to the wrong person; for the Evangelist, John, in the fourth chapter, and the second verse, expressly assures us that Jesus Christ baptized not, but his disciples: this settles the question once for all, and proves beyond all dispute that there is no connection between this incident and baptism.

But you will say, "Perhaps they brought the children to be baptized by the disciples?" Brethren, the disciples were not in the habit of baptizing infants, and this is clear from the case in hand. If they had been in the habit of baptizing infants, would they have rebuked the parents for bringing them? If it had been a customary thing for parents to bring children with such an object, would the disciples who had been in the constant habit of performing the ceremony, have rebuked them for

attending to it? Would any Church clergyman rebuke parents for bringing their children to be baptized? If he did so, he would act absurdly contrary to his own views and practice; and we cannot therefore imagine that if infant baptism had been the accepted practice, the disciples could have acted so absurdly as to rebuke the parents for bringing their little ones. It is obvious that such could not have been the practice of the disciples who were rebuked.

It is an excellent sermon and I agree with it, but it too misses the point. This bringing the children to Jesus, was done under the old covenant, the OT, not the NT. The Jews did not know anything about Christian Baptism and far less of the abominable practice of christening and it was in the centuries to come after Jesus that they invented christening. Besides, the boy children had been circumcised according to the Law of Moses and there was no law requiring them to be sprinkled with water as well. The Biblical Archaeological Society notes,

The first mention of child baptism comes from the bishop Irenaeus and dates to around 180 A.D. (*Adversus haereses* 2.22.4). But we must wait another 20 years to find a clear statement on the baptism of children, put in writing by the prolific author Tertullian, in 200 A.D. (*De baptismo* 18.1.4-5). Tertullian opposed baptizing children, who do not fully understand the significance of the rite. However, it is equally clear that by the end of the second century child baptism was already a reality. About 15 years later, the theologian Hippolytus in his *Apostolic Tradition* provides a palpable liturgical formulation of the baptism of children.

To what factor do we owe the rapid establishment of this habit within the Christian community between 180 and 200 A.D? The growing number of those who were born into Christian families (as opposed to adult converts) meant an increasing presence of children within the Christian community. When we consider the high infant mortality rate, we can see how an emergency practice of administering the salvific baptism to infants eventually became a normal practice—even more so under the circumstances of a **cruel pandemic**. Once the emergency of the epidemic was over, in 180 A.D. Irenaeus and other Christian theologians developed a theology of infant baptism and spread the teaching in the following 20 years, so much so that Tertullian, at the dawn of the third century, speaks of it as a commonly accepted practice.

What was the cruel pandemic? One ancient pandemic helped to establish the Christian rite of baptism administered to little children and infants, a practice not attested in early Christian communities until the late second century.

Sometime during 165 A.D. under Emperor Marcus Aurelius (r.161-180), the Roman Empire was struck by the first documented devastating outbreak of an infectious disease. Known as the Antonine Plague, it probably was the first appearance of smallpox in the Mediterranean and Europe. The origin of this pandemic was probably in the city of Seleucia, near present-day Baghdad. According to the most widely accepted hypothesis, the Roman soldiers sent to invade Parthia returned in 165, spreading the plague all the way back to Rome, where, according to some modern estimates, smallpox at its apex killed approximately 5,000 people per day. Mortality was so high it was not unusual to see caravans of fully loaded chariots carrying dead bodies from cities. The scourge reportedly wiped out more than 90 percent of the population in limited areas of Egypt and probably more than 20 percent of the Roman Empire's total population.

That's an interesting back story on infant christening and gives a reason for the sudden rise of this practice and its origin and goes to show it was not even heard of in the time of Jesus, and that it is a monstrous invention of men.

The babies were brought to Christ and that is a fact. As early as A.D. 400 Augustine appeals to the universal practice of infant baptism as proof that the church saw infants born with the stain of original sin. That shows that both Baptists and Paedo-Baptists admit that infants have original sin, and there is no age of innocence. So if sinful babies are brought to Jesus, are we right in saying Jesus saved them? Like when the man was brought to Jesus on a palette, *Mar 2:3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. Mar 2:4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. Mar 2:5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, **thy sins be forgiven thee**.* But Jesus doesn't say to the mothers, your babies are forgiven.

I know what a terrible child I was, what a deceitful youth, what a despicable person I turned out to be, and it was in spite of my Christian upbringing. It mattered not that I was once a harmless baby. Babies may look innocent but they soon grow, and then they can show how sinful they are and it was because they cannot show it that we deem them innocent. Every Tyrant, dictator, mass murderer, rapist, pervert and deviant was at the start of life, a baby. They were

not born with a gun in their hand or details of how they would kill 6 million Jews or murder millions of citizens in Russia or in the killing fields of Cambodia or in the genocides of Rwanda and Nigeria. There were possibly, among the babies that Jesus blessed, Jewish rebels and tax gatherers and anyway, if Jesus wanted those babies saved why didn't He save all babies?

The message of Jesus however, was not addressed to the babies but it was addressed to the disciples and I suggest, the parents, who might just do as the disciples did, but Jesus warns them all, *"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God"*.

Yes, we are commanded to bring a child up correctly, *Pro 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* It was after all the instilling of God's law in the next generation, *Deu 6:6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: Deu 6:7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Deu 6:8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. Deu 6:9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*

I do not suppose there is a "Christian" who would disagree with this, but I suppose you only have to look around at our so called "Christian" parenting, to see what an awful job we did of it, and how many of our children have departed from the faith. We have "sort of" brought our children up in the faith, but even they can see the disjunction between what we taught them and how we contradicted it by our behaviour. We behaved like hypocrites while expecting them to be model citizens. We bore down on the sin in their little lives but covered up the sin in our lives. We were hypocrites, but why did we do it?

In 2 Timothy 1:5, the apostle Paul reminded his young protégé of the faith that first resided in Timothy's mother and grandmother. According to a new report on families from Barna Group, most practicing Christians in the U.S. today (59 percent) similarly came to faith because of the influence from a believer in the household where they grew up. Of those, 68 percent said a mother's faith influenced them. Just under half (46 percent) indicated a father's faith was influential. And 37 percent said a grandparent's faith helped persuade them to become a Christian.

More than a third of practicing Christians came to faith for reasons other than positive interactions with people in their household, including 23 percent who

said they grew up with a negative example of Christianity and 15 percent who had no exposure to Christianity at home.

According to the Barna Group, 2013, Even though many children are raised by Christian parents and exposed to Christian teaching in churches, 59% of millennial children who grew up in the church and were born between the years of 1984 and 2002 have decided to leave the Christian faith or the institutional church during their first decade of adulthood. Just bringing children up in a religious environment is no guarantee of them becoming faithful.

Many people across the globe were converted in the years before it became known as the Welsh revival 1859. Eventually the revival fires burned down to the glowing embers of a contented faith. Because there were few people left to evangelise, they didn't evangelise anymore and their children didn't hear the Gospel, but they were brought up in the faith. The result of not being evangelised was that a whole generation missed out on the Gospel but in 1904 another revival swept Wales and brought them to Christ. It shows that we can fail to bring people from the knowledge of Jesus to the person of Jesus.

This is the point of Jesus' words to the disciples and parents, "***Suffer little children to come unto me***, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God". It is not a religious upbringing that saves you, it is not stories of Jesus that will increase your knowledge that will save you, and certainly not going to church that will save you. It is by coming to Jesus, "***Suffer little children to come unto me***", that will bring them near to Him and give them a better chance of being saved.

With the wisdom of hindsight it is clear that Jesus alone is all the children need, and filling them up with bible knowledge, without Christ, is making them into little hypocrites. Christ first and the things of Christ second, so that Christ is the strong foundation for all knowledge of Himself.

It is of note that we do not know what Jesus prayed for those children. Maybe He prayed that their parents would continue the good work and keep bring them to Him while they had time? We don't know what eulogy he spoke, but if it were to the parents it must have had conditions.

156. Do the Commands Save? *Luke 18: 18 -22*

Luk 18:18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Luk 18:19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. Luk 18:20 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. Luk 18:21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. Luk 18:22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

It is a bold, brave and righteous man that can say he keeps, continually, the commands of God. Could you be saved by being obedient to the law, or doing the law? According to these verses, Jesus seems to be saying, if you want everlasting life, then obedience to the Ten Commandments is the way to get it, and there is evidence that you could, *Lev 18:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the LORD your God. Lev 18:3 After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. Lev 18:4 Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God. Lev 18:5 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: **which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.***

John Gill observes,

all these things have I kept from my youth up: as soon as he was capable of learning, his parents taught him these precepts; and ever since he had the use of his reason, and understood the letter, and outward meaning of them, he had been careful to observe them; nor could he charge himself with any open and flagrant transgression of them; not understanding the internal sense, extensive compass, and spirituality of them; and therefore asks, **what lack I yet?** In what am I deficient hitherto? in what have I come short of doing these things? what remains at last to be performed? what other precepts are to be obeyed? if there are any other commands, I am ready to observe them, which may be thought necessary to obtain eternal life.

The young man had been brought up well and it was not a frivolous question that He asked, and would our children could be of the same mind to ask the same question. What can you do? It is almost that there is a doubt in his young mind that he is not doing enough, and he wants life, and he wants to know if by any chance he has not been diligent enough. He is earnest and approaches the Teacher with due reverence, and he calls Him, “good teacher”, and to his

surprise is corrected, *“Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? **none is good, save one, that is, God.**”*

That seems to be a conversation killer, after all the man is making a genuine enquiry and surely you don't want to put him off. But Jesus is not going to be flattered by anyone and He will have the young man know, right at the beginning, if you have not got your theology correct, its no use going on with you, because you will just go from error to bigger error. The first lesson to learn is that we have no other God's, and saying that a man is “good” is just plain wrong, as we shall see later in this discourse, and if saying that is what you think, then you have not got a clear understanding of sin, and especially your own sin.

The rebuke at the start of this conversation is important to the lesson that Jesus will give on “eternal life”. If you do not see your position in this world correctly, if you do not see your own state relative to God the Creator, that you are a sinner under judgement, then there is little hope for you even if you did keep the commands of God. You will just become a Pharisee.

When Jesus says to the man, *“Thou knowest the commandments”* is he talking specifically about the 10 Commands or does it encompass much more? Firstly, if the man had heard of Jesus' teaching, he would have known this. Jesus says the commands had more than an external conformity, an outward compliance in mind, in other words the commands were not just things you did but things you thought about, *Mat 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: Mat 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* So you didn't have to have a physical relationship with a woman to commit adultery, you could commit the sin in your mind. It was equally as bad.

This put quite a new emphasis on righteousness, because it wasn't just in what you conformed to outwardly, you could play “mind games” with the commands. In the privacy of your home, in the secret places of your mind, you could play out the world of imagination and fantasy. You could commit murder, robbery, rape, adultery, you could be as covetous as you wanted, as hateful to your enemy as you liked, imagining how you would like to punish him. You could play these things out in your mind, and no man would have any knowledge of it, and you could lead the life of a “good” Pharisee without anyone being the wiser. Except God knows what you are like and you cannot fool Him. Being



conscious of God is most important and the young man had shown already that he lacked a God consciousness, “*Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God*”.

The second point is does the young man understand the breadth of the commands? There are more than ten commands and we saw that these broke down to 613 commands in Scripture, plus thousands more unwritten ones which must have a bearing on these. They are immense in their scope, so that you would have to be as God to know what to do in every circumstance, and James says that if you fail in one command you have broken them all, *Jas 2:9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. Jas 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. Jas 2:11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.*

But that is not all. We are forgetting the “sin” which separates man from God and that too required dealing with and that had its own set of laws telling you how to do it, and what to offer. The Law was far more than the Ten Commandments so what is the young man saying, that he kept the Apodictic law, the 10 commands, that he kept the perceptive law, that he kept the sacrificial law, that he kept the sin offerings, the peace offerings, the wave offerings and all of the set feasts to the Lord? That was quite something if he did do it, but he didn’t as our Lord shows him, because that would have led to Jesus.

That young man reminds me of the Hasidic Jew. A Hasidic Jew is a member of a sect of ultra-Orthodox Judaism stemming from a revivalist movement in the 18th century. Hasidic Judaism differs from Orthodox Judaism in its emphasis on emotional spiritual expression and pious devotion. In fact, the name *Hasidim* (plural for *Hasid*) means “pious ones”. Orthodox Jews value rigorous textual study and contemplation, while Hasidic Jews, on the other hand, seek a more exuberant and sincere faith. These differences highlight the tensions between the educated elites and the common people that characterized many popular religious movements and reformations.

Hasidic Jews are regarded as ultra-Orthodox because they share characteristics with other fundamentalist religious groups, such as prescribed clothing and hairstyles. They also tend to read and interpret the Torah literally and follow charismatic leaders. Furthermore, they are more guarded against outside cultural influences than Orthodox Jews. Nevertheless, many Hassidic Jews have judiciously adopted modern cultural practices which enable them to live and work in urban areas today.

The Hasidic Jews and orthodox Jews have over the centuries thought about the laws of God and added detail to them. I think that they are so much into the niceties of law that they forget the Lord who gave them and they forget why they do the law. They concentrate on the details of law without seeing why, like for example, this law, the law of flushing the toilet,

It goes without saying that flushing a toilet is permitted on Shabbat. There is some discussion, however, whether it is permissible to flush a toilet that is equipped with a disinfectant device that colours the water as it is flushed. It is virtually unanimous among halachic authorities that one should not flush such a toilet on Shabbat. This is because doing so might be a violation of tzoveiah, the prohibition against colouring a substance or item on Shabbat. As such, those who use such devices in their home should remove them before Shabbat.

One who is faced with no choice but to use a toilet whose water will be coloured by flushing it has a few options to choose from. There are grounds to be lenient with the disinfecting devices that are affixed to the top of the tank rather than the bowl of the toilet. This is because when the toilet is flushed, the water is not coloured right away. The colouring only occurs after the water in the tank is refilled and reaches the top. The delay between the flushing of the toilet and the colouring of the water, a concept known as *gramma*, is what forms the basis for leniency in extenuating circumstances.

Disinfectant devices that are affixed to the rim of the toilet bowl are more problematic as the colouring takes place as soon as the toilet is flushed. In such a situation, one should remove the disinfectant device before flushing the toilet, preferably in an indirect manner. If even this is not possible, then the toilet may be flushed due to the principle of *kavod habriot*. In this case, however, it is preferable for one to flush the toilet with a *shinui*, in an irregular manner, such as with one's elbow, or the back of one's hand.

Why do we do the law, *Gal 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Gal 3:24 Wherefore **the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ**, that we might be justified by faith. Gal 3:25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.* The law is designed to bring us to Jesus, all its nuances send us seeking Him. It is not a thing in itself to be obeyed mindlessly, for the sake

of doing right, it was obeyed because it led to a person, it pointed the way, every law and ordinance cried out, "this way, keep coming, keep following".

It was like the shadow of the setting sun, it gave directions to the sun, but it wasn't the object of their desire, *Col 2:16 So let no one make rules about what you eat or drink or about holy days or the New Moon Festival or the Sabbath. Col 2:17 **All such things are only a shadow of things in the future; the reality is Christ.*** Those poor people who were stuck in the grip of the law, the wretched men who look for deliverance, *Rom 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Rom 7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

The man who finds Christ finds eternal life, *Rom 8:1 **There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,** who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. Rom 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: Rom 8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

Arthur Pink has this excellent comment on this subject,

That "blessed hope", then, which the Christian is "looking for" is not an event, but a Person: Christ himself. "And this is his name whereby he shall be called, the Lord of righteousness" (Jer. 23:6)—the Lord is our righteousness. "For he is our peace" (Eph. 2:13)—the Lord is our peace. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear" (Col. 3:4)—the Lord is our life.

"By the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, who is our hope" (1 Tim. 1:1)—the Lord is our hope. To me "that blessed hope" is summed up in three things. **First**, that Christ is coming to receive me unto himself. **Second**, that Christ will then make me like himself—for nothing less than that will satisfy him or the renewed heart. **Third**, that Christ is going to have me forever with himself an eternity of bliss spent in his own immediate presence. Then will be answered his prayer "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory" (John 17:24). Now "looking for that blessed Hope", for Christ himself, is an attitude of heart.

The Christian "looks" with the eyes of faith, and faith always rests alone upon God and his Word. Faith is not influenced by sensational items from the newspapers about the latest doings of Hitler and Mussolini etc. Scripture says, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh", and faith believes it. The Christian "looks" with the eyes of hope, joyously anticipating perfect fellowship with its Beloved. The Christian "looks" with the eyes of love, for nothing but his personal presence can satisfy him. It is an attitude of anticipation:

Christ has given his sure promise that he is coming, but the exact time is withheld—that we may be in constant readiness. It is an attitude of expectation, for we do not "look for" something we know will never happen. It is an attitude of supplication, the heart's response is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." A final word upon Christ's title here: "The glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ", or as Bagster's Interlinear more correctly renders it, "And appearing of the glory, the great God and Saviour, of our Lord Jesus Christ".

Our Lord would encourage this young man to look away from his works to look upon Himself, *Mar 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him **loved him**, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.* Notice that Mark adds in his account that Jesus loved the man. This was no argumentative Jew before Him but a genuine seeker, and Jesus was there to help him on his way, to "**follow me**".

157. The Eye of the Needle *Luke 18: 21 -25*

Luk 18:21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. Luk 18:22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. Luk 18:23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. Luk 18:24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! Luk 18:25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

The young man had been an observant Jew from an early age, but what does this mean? Many people think it means from the time that he was reckoned as a man and that would be when he became a “son of the commandment” or “bar mitzvah”. He was, as is supposed, at the initiation ceremony of a Jewish boy who has reached the age of 13 and is regarded as ready to observe religious precepts and eligible to take part in public worship. People like to think Jesus was going through some initiation at Passover, *Luk 2:41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. Luk 2:42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.*

In the Bible, a man reached the age of majority at age 20, when he was eligible for war and taxation, *Exo 30:13 This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD. Exo 30:14 Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD.* In Talmudic times, the age of majority was moved to 13, and in recognition of the son’s change in status, the father pronounced a blessing in which he praised God for relieving him of responsibility for his son’s conduct. But no celebration marked the occasion.

The Online Bible College states that,

When Jesus reached his 13th birthday, he became a bar mitzvah, which literally means “son of the commandment,” and may have gone through a simple ceremony that marked his initiation into manhood. This bar mitzvah ceremony recognized that the boy had formally taken on the yoke of the Torah and that he had the responsibility to observe all the commandments of the Sinai Covenant.

Which is a load of “tosh and rubbish” and it should remind you that if you are using your Bible for a study course, to check the facts instead of swallowing what a man says. The roots of the bar mitzvah, the “son of the commandments,” are obscure. **The term never once appears in the Hebrew Bible.** It is of relatively recent origin and although the ceremony today differs from its ancient past it only became a unanimously accepted Jewish custom some 400 years ago. Therefore Jesus did not go up to the Temple for a bar mitzvah, and to hang Jewish traditions, no matter how late they developed, upon the Bible is falsifying scripture.

The young ruler had kept the commandments from his youth upward, with no mention of a bar mitzvah, and we can only guess at him struggling as a child, not only to understand what the laws meant but how to do them. He may have learned the words of the 10 Commandments but I imagine he little understood the concept of adultery, murder, fornication, theft for example, at an early stage in life. The child is told that it is wrong to do some things and can hardly distinguish from murder or adultery on the one hand, and to be told, “Don’t chew with your mouth open, stop slapping your chops”, on the other. They are all laws which a parent gets him to conform to, social rules to make life bearable and equitable, but the child just conforms to them, not understanding fully the root of law.

The knowledge of right and wrong, sin, remained dormant in him, but the beast awoke when sin reared its ugly head, *Rom 7:8 It was sin that used this command as a way of making me have all kinds of desires. But without the Law, sin is dead. om 7:9 Before I knew about the Law, I was alive. **But as soon as I heard that command, sin came to life**, Rom 7:10 and I died. The very command that was supposed to bring life to me, instead brought death. CEV.*

I think that this young man is sincere in his approach to Jesus. He has spent his life as best he could, obeying the rules but has seeds of doubt were now floating in his head, as to whether he had done enough and he recognises that Jesus truly knew the answer. He is not like the Pharisee, in that he has a genuine desire to please God, and all his life, from his youth up, he has cared for these things. How much better is he, than us, who scarcely even think about the commands of God, let alone whether we do them correctly? We are Pharisees compared to him.

He wanted to be right with God, and I do not see him as an arrogant man, showing pride in his achievements. He is not like the man we saw a few moments ago saying, “*I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican*”. This is a cry of help and so Jesus helps him, *Mar 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him **loved him**, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*

I don’t think he was expecting to hear this. The impossibility of “doing the law”, keeping the law, was dawning on him. The immensity and the scope of the Law was crushing. The righteous Pharisee didn’t find it so hard, because in his system of self-righteousness, having neglected “the weightier matters of the law”, he was cruising his own boat down a self-made river, and he didn’t even see the problems that the young ruler saw. Jesus says in effect, “you shall not covet”, and this is one of the commands which has relevance to the young man. He does

covet, perhaps not his neighbours wife but certainly the goods he has been entrusted with. And he sees the difficulty he faces, and he sees his failure to keep the whole law, because he has failed on this one point of law. He would cry with Paul, *Rom 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Rom 7:24 **O wretched man that I am!** who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* He must feel like giving up.

And we dismiss his plight as not at all relevant to us, in our comfortable homes, sitting in judgement upon another struggling man, looking at him and saying “come not near me, I am holier than you”. And we do not realise, as modern day Pharisees, that we are in the same straits as him.

It seems all right for the young ruler to give his money away, doesn't it, after all it isn't our money, and he is rich, and so by that statement, we often take it that we are poor in comparison with him, and therefore this action does not apply to us, does it? Lucky us! We turn against this man for being rich, we say that a Jew or a Christian should not be rich, and we try to make him a bigger sinner than us. But what if the shoe was on the other foot, and Jesus had asked you to sell everything, sell your house, sell your car, sell the surplus clothes that you store up, sell your precious items which you use to consume your time in leisure, your home entertainment systems, how would you feel then? We are not so different to the rich young ruler are we?

Fancy being “very sorrowful because you are very rich”. That young man was. I think most people would look upon those riches as a mark of God's blessing, something to take the pressure off of life, financial security we call it, not dependency on God. We could then spend our time enjoying this life, we could have a luxury holiday abroad, every other month, and we could spend the time in between recovering. We could have a different car for every day of the week, and perhaps even a helicopter. We would need a bigger place to live, because of the space needed for all the cars and we would need a helicopter landing pad. We might even have enough money to buy a boat. And we would eat and drink ourselves to death in the most extravagant way and we would reap the harvest of that lifestyle.

The young man is worried that he won't get in to the kingdom, and he wants to know if he is on track for heaven. He makes, I think, a genuine enquiry, not a boast before all present that he is more righteous because of the things he does. He runs to Jesus, *Mar 10:17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there **came one running, and kneeled to him**, and asked him, Good Master, what*

shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? He kneels down before Jesus as he asks him that question. He is not playing a game, he is earnest in his request.

He has some lingering doubt in his mind that he hasn't done enough to get in to the kingdom, although he is a good Jew, and he speaks his doubt, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Yes, he was brought up on the words of the Covenant, *Lev 18:4 Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God. Lev 18:5 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, **he shall live in them:** I am the LORD.*

He was of the chosen people, he was sincere, he was dutiful, he was a son of the commandment but he had not done all the law. It was a Herculean task, and no matter how righteous we would think we were or strive to be, when we go to Christ we are told again, "one thing you lack". And that is the point we must arrive at, the complete surrender of self. He had not quite arrived yet, and he went away sorrowful, but we are not told how long it was before he realised the problem, or whether he ever did. But I suspect that he did find Christ, because of that telling word, "He loved him", and because He loved the young man, I have hope that I will meet him in glory, *1Jn 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, **but that he loved us**, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

He was told, "*come, follow me*", which is the best advice he could get. Following the law had not made him closer to the Kingdom, and he could hardly get in to the Kingdom with his wealth, but he could follow Jesus and trust in Him to get in the kingdom, and that started another conversation, *Luk 18:25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*

What did Jesus mean by this preposterous analogy? The "Eye of the Needle" has been claimed to be a gate in Jerusalem, which opened after the main gate was closed at night. A camel could not pass through the smaller gate unless it was stooped and had its baggage removed. The story has been put forth since at least the 11th century and possibly as far back as the 9th century. However, there is no widely accepted evidence for the existence of such a gate and it is another one of those lies which are made up to give a false explanation of scriptures.

Since Jerusalem was knocked flat in AD 70, and the earliest known map of Jerusalem is from the Byzantine period, 400 AD, we have no idea of what Jerusalem really looked like in Jesus day. The oldest known geographic floor mosaic in art history was discovered in 1884, but no research was carried out

until 1896. It has been heavily used for the localisation and verification of sites in **Byzantine Jerusalem**, such as the Damascus Gate, the Lions' Gate, the Golden Gate, the Zion Gate, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Tower of David.

The other explanation of Jesus story is based upon a typo. Cyril of Alexandria (fragment 219) claimed that "camel" was a Greek scribal typo where kamêlos (κάμηλος, camel) was written in place of kamilos (κάμιλος, meaning "rope" or "cable").

The absolute absurdity of the analogy, a camel going through a tiny needle, threading the needle with a camel instead of a thread, makes a very important point and the ridiculousness of it, cements it into our memory. It is an impossibility and we might say, "pigs might fly" or "hell would freeze over" before it happened. In fact, listen to what Jesus is saying, *Luk 18:25 For **it is easier** for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* It is not that a camel can get through the eye of a needle, but that it is easier for a camel to get through **rather than a rich man**. Well, if you have never seen a camel go through the eye of a needle, you surely have not seen a rich man go through! It is an impossibility.

In Mark's Gospel account, he says, *Mar 10:23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! Mar 10:24 **And the disciples were astonished at his words.** But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! Why were they taken aback with astonishment?*

The principle of Biblical wealth is different from human wealth. Wealth is transitory, ephemeral, one minute you can be rich the next poverty comes, *Pro 6:11 Suddenly, everything is gone, as though it had been taken by an armed robber.* CEV. It is as Paul says, *1Ti 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;*

There was a period when Jews who were rich, got so by obedience to Him, *Deu 28:1 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: Deu 28:2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. Deu 28:3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Deu 28:4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of*

thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Deu 28:5 Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.

Riches were a sign of God's blessing upon Israel, so it was a big surprise to find that it was a curse more than a blessing. What had happened to change things? The Nation of Israel had gone bad. They broke the terms of the covenant and they would be cursed instead of blessed, *Deu 28:15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: Deu 28:16 Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Deu 28:17 Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.*

Israel was not the favourite nation it was once but this seems to have escaped the attention of the disciples. Riches did not mean that you were automatically blessed, that an entrance into the Kingdom was yours by birthright, as John the Baptist said, *Luk 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*

It was going to be impossible for the rich to enter the Kingdom.

158. Who can be Saved? Luke 18: 26 -30

Luk 18:26 And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? Luk 18:27 And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. Luk 18:28 Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. Luk 18:29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Luk 18:30 Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

Who then can be saved, that is the question? What is the difference between one man and another? What is the difference between a disciple and a Pharisee, between a Roman and a Galilean, between Publicans and Sadducees, between a Jew and a Gentile? They are all sinners and all headed in the same direction, eternal death.

What is the difference between an Anglican and a Catholic, a Baptist and a Methodist, a Quaker and a JW, a Mormon and a Hindu, a Muslim and a Buddhist, a Marxist and a Republican? There is no difference because they are all

philosophies of life, all some man's belief of what is, what to do and what is to come. They are therefore all religions by definition, a particular system of faith and worship, a pursuit or interest followed with great devotion. But they have in common that they are manmade beliefs. If they were all true, we would have the same beliefs' and values, but we don't, we all differ from one another.

So what is true and what is false about them? Can they be partially true? The Catholics believe in Christ, but it is a different Christ than the Baptists. Some religions have a different "deity" and these say that it is all right because all religions lead to God, but which God? Some have an American version of Christ who apparently sent an angel to the big apple and to a man called Joseph Smith to read some plates which formed part of the book of Mormon, along with sections culled from the AV. The JW's under Judge Rutherford across the other side of America, built Beth Sarim, the house of princes, to accommodate the resurrected holy men of old, like King David. When a vagrant claiming to be David turned up at the mansion, he was shown the door!

All religions claim a higher authority, but they all show a human leader calling the shots, and they are all pulling you into their brand of religion by promising you that they have the exclusive way to the Kingdom and everyone other than them is mislead. You could of course go to the other religions, but the sects would rather you didn't. They have the way of salvation, exclusively, and you stick with them you will be saved, except that there never has been anyone come back from the dead to show that they were right, other than Jesus. And He is the standard, above what men say, and He alone is the one to follow, not some men or manmade organisation. When will people get it into their heads that Jesus said "Follow Me", not follow a church, a man, or a denomination.

The difference between the disciples and the Pharisees was that the disciples had chosen to follow Jesus and the Pharisees had not. Of that larger band of disciples, there came a time when they too stopped following Him, *Joh 6:64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. Joh 6:66 **From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.** Joh 6:67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?*

Some of the disciples walked with Jesus part of the way and some walked the whole distance. Would you say that those who walked part of the way were "saved", *Joh 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* No they were not. No they did not

complete the course, to the end. The Pharisees and a majority of the Jews didn't complete anything and as for following Jesus, they were stuck in the past, they were following Abraham, *Joh 8:39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. Joh 8:40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Joh 8:41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.*

Now I hear you mumbling, well, you will never find the perfect Church and even if you did you would spoil it by joining it. But tell me what the perfect church is and where in Scripture I am told to go and find it? It does not exist on earth. Where is Scripture that says I am told to go and mingle with a bunch of people who have little concern for the truth of Christ or most importantly doing the truth? They often huddle together in these groups, called churches, because there is safety in numbers, and you can believe what you want and do what you want as long as you stick by that church.

Never am I told to go and find either the perfect church or an imperfect one, **I am told to go and find Christ.** I am told to gather together with those who accept Christ and His teachings, and where we will exhort one another, *Heb 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Heb 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

What is the point of getting together with people of a different mindset, people who are lukewarm, people who will insist upon the traditions of men, people who will not search the scriptures, even if they do go to a church? They will be a constant drag against your pursuit of Christ, *2Co 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? Who says that they are unbelievers? By their fruit you shall know them, Mat 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Mat 7:16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Mat 7:17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. Mat 7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Mat 7:19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Mat 7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*

There is much more involved in being a “Christian” than going to a church service. That is all over in a couple of hours, and when it is, people go back to indulging themselves in the world. God time 2 hours, me time 166 hours, every week. They do not realise that they should be a Christian for the other 166 hours as well. There is much that they can be occupied in outside of meetings because it is outside of meeting that they get a chance to practice their faith, practice the fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace etc., practice putting off the old man, seriously examine your friendships and acquaintances in the light of the Gospel, develop that spiritual gift the Lord has given you, and so the list goes on. But there are some people who think that they were saved and do nothing about their inner life at all, and do not change over the years. Is there something wrong with them? You bet there is.

That idea caused a commotion with the people following Jesus and they asked Him, “*Who then can be saved?*” because they had not given enough attention to being saved, and they had gone on in their lives going to the synagogue and not much else, hoping to be saved because they were Jews. How do I know this? *Mar 12:35 And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David? Mar 12:36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. Mar 12:37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.*

The common people were overjoyed to hear the teaching of Christ, they followed Him around in their thousands because He interpreted the scriptures for them, gave them things that they could do to improve their relationship with the Almighty, not just going along and hearing the word read but having the word applied to their lives.

William Tyndale was talking with a friend about the need for everyone to be able to know God on their own. At that time it was illegal to own a copy of the Bible in the English language. Bibles were only allowed in Latin to make sure only the highly educated could read the Bible. Tyndale’s friend wasn’t sure ordinary folks needed to know the Scriptures. He thought it might be good enough for the Pope to know the Bible in Latin and then tell all the English speakers what it says. To this Tyndale replied, “I defy the Pope and all his laws, if God spare my life, I will make a boy that driveth the plough know more of the Scripture than thou dost.” On September 6th, 1536 William Tyndale was killed and then burned at the stake for his passion to see every person, even a plough boy, have access to all of God’s truth.

That is what the various religions want for you, somebody else reading and interpreting scripture for you, because you either trust that person or are just plain lazy, too lazy to study for yourself. Do you know how I know if a person studies for themselves? It is because they have something to tell of the Lord's dealings with their soul, they have what Jesus describes as, *Joh 7:38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

A revival took place in French-speaking Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century. It was called Haldane's Revival after a Scotsman named Robert Haldane (1764-1842). After his conversion, Haldane became concerned with the evangelisation of Europe, a passion which found him in the city of Geneva in the fall of 1815.

Robert Haldane was sitting on a park bench by the lake of Geneva one day when he got into a conversation with some university students. They were studying for the ministry, but they were clearly not converted. So Haldane invited them to his flat in the old city, where they participated that winter in what we would call a Bible study. Haldane taught them from the book of Romans, on which he would eventually write a great commentary.

Each of those young men was soundly converted through that study and became an effective leader in the revival that followed. These men were so effective in this work that a professor in the university named Monsieur Cheneviers later wrote to Haldane to ask what it was that had gotten into these young students, what had so profoundly transformed them and made them into such effective Christian workers.

Haldane answered in a letter that is now part of his commentary. He said it was a study of the last verses of Romans 11, particularly verse 36, in which God is pictured as his own last end in everything he does; ***'for from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory for ever! Amen.'*** He said it was understanding that 'the manifestation of the glory of God is the great end of creation, that he has himself chiefly in view in all his works and dispensations, and that it is a purpose in which he requires that all his intelligent creatures should acquiesce, and seek and promote it as their first and paramount duty.'

In more modern language he meant that God's purpose was that man should know Him, and as Paul says, *Php 3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Php 3:8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win*

Christ, Php 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: Php 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; Php 3:11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

This is the duty of men, not playing around in “churches”, singing songs to themselves, not bothering to learn of Him because you have a paid teacher, and you don’t have to even open your bible from one week to the next, and although you say you know Him, in truth you know little of Him, because your years were spent on yourself. No wonder that when they heard Jesus speak they wondered how they could be saved.

What man could not do, Jesus says, God can, *Rom 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: Rom 8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* But it is only through God that it can be done, *Luk 18:27 And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.*

Well says Peter, we have given up everything to follow you, to which Mark’s Gospel adds, “*what shall we have therefore?*” What is the bottom line? Did we do it for nothing, for an idea, or for reward? No says Jesus, you will get a reward, *Luk 18:29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Luk 18:30 Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.* Don’t worry, He will pay you.

For all the listening and the teaching that the disciples went through, there was an element of “pay off” that they expected and it had been asked for before, *Mat 18:1 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?* Luke does not include the request of James and John in his account, but it is another show of the mercenary spirit, *Mar 10:35 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. Mar 10:36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? Mar 10:37 **They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.***

Were they were following Jesus for the chance of a pay day, having left their professions for what they presumed was a better one? It might explain the fact

that their principles went overboard when it came to losing their lives with Jesus, *Mat 26:55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. Mat 26:56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.*

When they came to their senses, they would die for Jesus.

159. Hidden in Plain Sight *Luke 18: 31 - 34*

*Luk 18:31 Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. Luk 18:32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: Luk 18:33 And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. Luk 18:34 **And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.***

In a parallel passage, *Mar 10:32 And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, **they were afraid.** And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, Mar 10:33 Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: Mar 10:34 And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.*

They were amazed and afraid of what was happening to them but without the slightest comprehension of the great events coming, *Joh 12:16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.....Luk 9:44 Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. Luk 9:45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.*

If the disciples were afraid, did it have anything to do with a misunderstanding of the role of the Christ or if you were Jewish, the Messiah? I want to focus in on the

word “Christ” and see if we get a better understanding of the disciple’s view of who this man was. Of course we know that it was not His birth name and He was either called “Jesus from Nazareth” or “Jesus ben Joseph”, but that is in our language and that is of relatively recent origin.

The first English language book to make a clear distinction in writing between ⟨i⟩ and ⟨j⟩ was the King James Bible 1st Revision Cambridge 1629 and an English grammar book published in 1633. The usage of the name Jesus is fairly recent, and up until about 400 years ago, the name Jesus was not in wide usage, *Iesus* was. Jesus, which is the name used by most English-speaking people today, is an English transliteration of a Germanic adaptation, of a Latin transliteration, of a Greek transliteration of an originally Hebrew name, that is simply Yeshua or Joshua. I would prefer if we would be consistent and call the OT saint Jesus instead of Joshua.

So a more Biblical name, His birth name, a name better understood by His Jewish disciples was “Yeshua ben Joseph” or “Yeshua of Nazareth”. The name “Christ” was a title given to Him after His birth which defined His whole ministry. As we try to find the origins of this particular character, the Messiah, I will point out to you it is a person who we have grown up with, knowing Him through the “Christmas story”, the child born to be King, the child Herod tried to assassinate. But if you had been living with the Jews of that day, would you have known what the Messiah was without all of our 2000 years of Christian tradition?

Would you, if you had the scrolls of Scripture at your disposal, the Old Testament, been able to identify the Messiah or the Messianic concept from them? I think the wisdom of hindsight is wonderful, but looking in the “rear view mirror” at what has happened and interpreting it, is not the method that we generally use. If I say that the NT says this about the Messiah, and interpret an OT passage in the light of that NT passage, a passage that seems to have no bearing upon it, is that “rightly dividing the word”? For example, if I look in Google for, “What does the Bible say about the Messiah”, I get the following Scriptures,

Deuteronomy 18:15 “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen..... Genesis 49:10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.... Genesis 3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” ESV.

These are all put down as proof of the Messiah, but there is no mention of the Messiah by name, in any of those verses, but we interpret them in the light of what we know, in the light of the New Testament, and we put a “messianic spin” on them, and we say, there you are, Jesus the Messiah in the OT. But if you were a Jew at the time of Jesus, you could not have gone to a NT to explain the Old Testament, in fact you would have considered it a heresy to even think about addition of a New Testament to God’s sacred word. You would have had to find the Messiah from the Scripture you had to hand, which was of course the OT.

Let us take as our point of departure, in exploring the person of the Messiah, Herod’s questioning of the Jews as to where Christ should be born, *Mat 2:4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where **Christ** should be born.* You will see that this is rendered, *Mat 2:4 Herod brought together the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses and asked them, “Where will the **Messiah** be born?” CEV.* So we have our first difficulty to overcome, the meaning of the original words, and whether we are faithfully translating the words, or putting a spin on them to suit our doctrine, or trying to be helpful and making it more understandable.

Herod wanted to know where Christ should be born, and the Greek word “Christos” is used in the Greek text. The word Messiah has been substituted in another version to make it more understandable if you were a Jew, but the underlying Greek word is still Christ. So this version has tried to be helpful by substituting Messiah for Christ. Now wouldn’t it be lovely if either Christ or Messiah had been used consistently throughout the Scriptural translations, and then we would see something more. I shall use Messiah for both the OT and the NT, and I remind you the both the Hebrew and the Greek words, Messiah and Christos mean anointed.

When we look for the anointed one, the Messiah, who is mentioned in Matthew, *Mat 2:4*, we find the closest reference in the OT scroll of Micah, *Mic 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* You will notice that there is no reference to the Messiah but to a ruler, “*whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*”. Yet in the minds of the Magi, the “*the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses*”, that it was the Messiah, the anointed one, that they spoke of, albeit nothing is spoken of Him in Micah. Messiah obviously fitted the bill for the place of His birth, but it is so far a tenuous link.

Another reference is in John’s Gospel where the Samaritan woman at Jacobs’s well, says she was aware that the Messiah, the Christ, was coming, *Joh 4:25 The*

woman saith unto him, I know that **Messiah** cometh, **which is called Christ**: when he is come, he will tell us all things. So the Messiah must be in the Torah. Why? Because the Samaritans held only to the Torah, not to the other books of the OT, so the reference to Messiah must be in Genesis, or Exodus, or Leviticus, or Numbers, or Deuteronomy or all of those books. But where is it? Search for Messiah and it is not there in our English versions. But look in an Hebrew interlinear or Hebrew OT, and Messiah pops up in 38 verses, and in Leviticus 4 times. What is going on, are they deliberately hiding the word Messiah from us?

Here is the correct translation, *Lev 4:3 If the priest that is **Messiah** do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering.....Lev 4:5 And the priest that is Messiah shall take of the bullock's blood, and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation:Lev 4:16 And the priest that is **Messiah** shall bring of the bullock's blood to the tabernacle of the congregation:...]Lev 6:22 And the priest of his sons that is **Messiah** in his stead shall offer it: it is a statute for ever unto the LORD; it shall be wholly burnt.....1Sa 2:34 And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. 1Sa 2:35 And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine **Messiah** forever. 1Sa 2:36 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.*

That was Messiah the Priest, and this is Messiah the King, *1Sa 2:10 The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his **Messiah**.*

In the Historical Books of the Bible, the “Messiah”, the anointed one, is the King. In the Book of Psalms where the word “Messiah” appears a number of times, it refers almost always to a King. Many of the royal psalms look for a righteous King, who will rule according to God’s word and thus bring justice and peace.

Both priests and kings were anointed with oil, when they were consecrated and they became instituted leaders, the priest in the Temple and the king in the kingdom, a religious leadership and a temporal leadership. And there is one prophet who was anointed with oil, Elisha, *1Ki 19:16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint (נָשָׂא) to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of*

Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. מָשַׁח means to rub with oil.

It is only in the later books of the Old Testament, especially in the book of Daniel, that we begin to find the word messiah referring to someone who is coming, *Dan 9:25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto **the Messiah** the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. Dan 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall **Messiah** be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*

The picture we have so far is of a Messiah who may be a priest, a king or a prophet. This person is not clearly identifiable right away but is like a “Ghost in the machine”, and I know that I am not using it in the context that it was intended but it seems to me to sum up the gradual revelation of Scripture. The revelation of the Person of Christ is like a ghost in the machine, a ghost in Scripture, the Holy Ghost, and as He sheds more light on the person of Jesus, so we see, by degrees, the formation of something beautiful, and the revelation of the Messiah becomes a reality.

The Revelation is different to each generation, and the subsequent generation gets a bigger picture as more is revealed and more light shed. The generations of Adam knew less than the generations of Noah, and they knew less than the generations of Abraham, and they knew less than the generations of Moses. For instance, there is much more knowledge accumulated with time, much more of God’s dealings to consider. There are things that God reveals in a time that is appropriate, and it is not certain even then that the persons involved really understood the full import, Did Abel know that he was imitating the death of Christ, did he fully understand sacrifice? Did Abraham in offering up his only son, fully understand the linkage to the death of God’s Son, Jesus?

We look in that rear view mirror and see the correspondence of events and say, there is Jesus, but that has only come with the knowledge of later revelation. It may have been revealed to the ancients in part, but not I think as fully as to us, *1Pe 1:11 searching what, or what manner of time, **the Spirit of Christ which was in them** pointed out, testifying before of the sufferings which belonged to Christ, and the glories after these.* Darby. Now in all these ancients, there was “**the Spirit of Christ which was in them**” and they searched, they

investigated, trying to know what Christ was doing, but He kept much of it back because they were not ready for it.

Just as the disciples had all the clues, yet they could not put them together, they were held from knowing, and we too have an imperfect knowledge, *1Co 13:9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 1Co 13:10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 1Co 13:11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 1Co 13:12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

160. The Messiah Revealed *Luke 18: 31 - 34*

Luk 18:31 Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. Luk 18:32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: Luk 18:33 And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. Luk 18:34 And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

The Messiah without doubt, brings together the best of all the institutions and artefacts of the OT. He is the “summum bonum”, the highest good, the ultimate goal of the OT. But He appear gradually, not suddenly, and gradually He emerged from the pattern of Gods work in the world to be revealed as a person, *Gal 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, Gal 4:5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

But He is not fully revealed at once but emerges in a series of revelations until the whole picture is made clear as to who He is. In the first book of the Bible Genesis, we find cryptic sayings, like this one, *Gen 3:14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* To our fore fathers, without the Scriptures that we have, without the subsequent history, what would they make of it?

Did Abel realise his death would be remembered in the long line of prophet martyrs, or that his animal sacrifice had something to do with the Messiah? Did Abraham realise who his “seed” was, that it was the same Messiah he saw in the future and in whose day he rejoiced, or did he see it through a dark glass? Did Abraham realise that he was enacting the Crucifixion, when he offered up his only son. Again looking in the rear view mirror it is quite clear to us he did, but to the ancients it may have been a cloudy image.

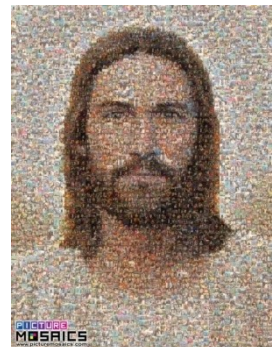
When God said to Moses, *Exo 25:8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. Exo 25:9 According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.* Did he reason that what he is making had its counterpart in heaven, and that God was bringing a little part of heaven to earth, part of His dwelling place? What did Moses understand the items of the tabernacle stood for, had he reasoned that they were something to do with a person? Had he realised for example that the “mercy seat” was Gods own Son, the Messiah, did he see it dimly, looking forward to the future? Did he see that God who dwelt between the cherubim was the Messiah? To those in the NT it is clear, *Rom 3:24 being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; Rom 3:25 whom God has set forth a mercy-seat, through faith in his blood, for the shewing forth of his righteousness, in respect of the passing by the sins that had taken place before, through the forbearance of God; Darby.*

It is obvious to us that these things are glimpses of the Messiah’s glory, and the scripture pathways have been well trodden since that day, but the pathways that are clear to us, were they as clear to them? Were the sacrifices seen to symbolise something greater, the lamb killed at Passover, the escape from Egypt, the entry into a land of Promise, or were they just things that happened in History without absolute meaning, or did they show the Messiah and His deliverance? There are so many details that require explanation that the true Jews, looking to their God to tell them what is going on must have been overwhelmed.

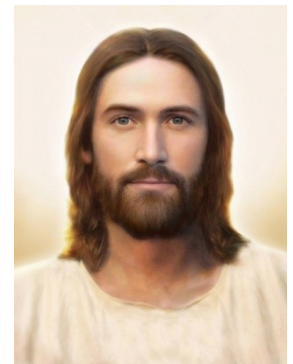
Why did we do the “Passover”, they would have asked, and so it was written, *Exo 12:26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? Exo 12:27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD’S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.* It had a religious meaning because they **worshipped**. These things were gathered together until a clear plan of redemption was in view before them.

God had often appeared to them in mysterious ways, like the appearance to Abraham, *Gen 18:1 And the **LORD** (יהוה) appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; Gen 18:2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, **three men** stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground.* God appeared as three men. This must have got the people thinking about the transcendent nature of God, His nature beyond or above the range of the normal or physical human experience. The mystery of God was being revealed to man, which ultimately would be seen in the Messiah.

Then there was the “Prophet”, *Deu 18:18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. Deu 18:19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.* This was to be a prophet like Moses, who at some time in the future would speak the words of God, clearly in a human in nature but given by God.



You would expect the Prophets to have been clearer and more definitive on the person of the Messiah, but they do not give much away. The prophets are subject to God, and what God feeds in to us, they deliver to us, but they cannot deliver what God withholds. So it is always in the fullness of time, God’s time that we get revelation.



I have said the Messiah is like a ghost in the machine, the concept of the mind existing alongside and separate to the body, a gradual revelation, a series of thoughts and ideas which over time become clearer until they become a reality in the person of Jesus. Another way of looking at it is like a tapestry, a tapestry of the Messiah, which as all pictures do, starts with a blank piece of material. Each manifestation of the Messiah is a picture that is sown into place on the material. Pictures like Abel sacrificing his lamb, Abel being killed by Cain, Abraham and the covenant whereby he saw the “seed”, Abraham sacrificing Isaac, Jehovah appearing as three men to Abraham, Moses and the Passover, the prophet that was to come after the similitude of Moses, the Tabernacle as God’s dwelling place and the mercy seat where God met Moses, and so on, each stitched into place. The small images making up a much bigger collage, which if we stand back from, it comes into a focus, it reveals the Messiah. The Messiah is not so much a Person, I say so with reverence, but a divine concept. The Messiah is all that God would have us know of Him and that concept eventually becomes a reality.

There are at least 351 Old Testament Prophecies fulfilled In Jesus Christ that have a NT reference to their fulfillment. There are no doubt many more that reference Him, such that when He came there was no uncertainty who he was. People like Simeon and Anna, recognized Him as a child. There was a testimony of who Jesus was, an inner light shining upon Him. Herod too recognized his person as the Messiah although it was only a baby, and even the Samaritans recognized that a Messiah was coming.

The disciples recognised Him, *Joh 1:40 Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard this from John and followed him. Joh 1:41 He first finds his own brother Simon, and says to him, We have found **the Messiah** (which being interpreted is Christ). Joh 1:42 And he led him to Jesus. Jesus looking at him said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jonas; thou shalt be called Cephas (which interpreted is stone).* Darby.

Peter and Mary and Martha believed He was the Messiah, *Mar 8:29 Then Jesus asked them, "But who do you say I am?" "You are the **Messiah**!" Peter replied.Joh 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die; Joh 11:26 and those who live and believe in me will never die. Do you believe this?" Joh 11:27 "Yes, Lord!" she answered. "I do believe that you are the **Messiah**, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."* GNB.

Many of the crowds believed He was the Messiah, *Joh 7:40 When the crowd heard Jesus say this, some of them said, "He must be the Prophet!" Joh 7:41 Others said, "He is the **Messiah**!" Others even said, "Can the **Messiah** come from Galilee? Joh 7:42 The Scriptures say that the **Messiah** will come from the family of King David. Doesn't this mean that he will be born in David's hometown of Bethlehem?"* CEV

This is all summed up, after the event by Jesus Himself, *Luk 24:25 Then Jesus said to them, "How foolish you are, how slow you are to believe everything the prophets said! Luk 24:26 Was it not necessary for the **Messiah** to suffer these things and then to enter his glory?" Luk 24:27 And Jesus explained to them what was said about himself **in all the Scriptures, beginning with the books of Moses and the writings of all the prophets.*** GNB. It was finally revealed in **ALL** of the scriptures.

One expects Jesus the Messiah to be anointed and He was but unusually it was with almost contempt for the high flown religious ceremonies of man. It was by

the hand of Magdalene that He was anointed, *Luk 7:44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Luk 7:45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Luk 7:46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment..... Mar 14:3 And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and **poured it on his head.***

The scene is right out of the Song of Songs, *Son 1:12 While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.* He was anointed. But not for this world's benefit, He was anointed for death, and the coming reign in His Kingdom, *Mat 26:12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.*

Which brings us back to Jesus telling His disciples about His death. If they were not to understand it, then why did He bother to tell them? If they did not understand these things, then their view of the Messiah was incomplete, and this possibly shows the misunderstanding they had of Him on the Emmaus road, *Luk 24:21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.*

They think that Jesus "*should have redeemed Israel*", a similar question they asked at His ascension, *Act 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* They were still obsessed by the nation of Israel, by Jesus leading the earthly nation as an earthly king, perhaps because they had neglected the other side of the Messiah story, the suffering Saviour, *Isa 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? Isa 53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. Isa 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Isa 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. Isa 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

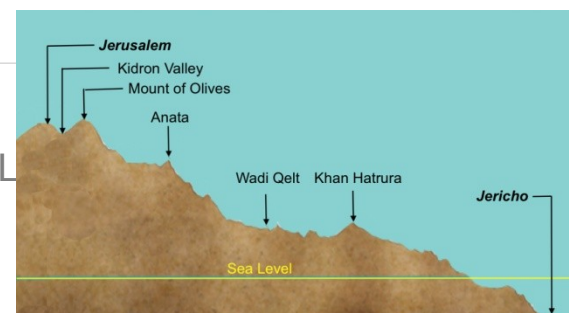
They had been selective in their understanding, taking only the parts of Scripture which looked at the Triumph of the Messiah and neglecting the Scriptures the spoke of His suffering. That is why they did not understand, *Luk 18:32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: Luk 18:33 And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. Luk 18:34 And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.*

It seems to me that we have just the same view of the Messiah and His messianic mission today, contrary to Scripture.

161. Bartimaeus Luke 18: 35 - 42

Luk 18:35 And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: Luk 18:36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. Luk 18:37 And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. Luk 18:38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. Luk 18:39 And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. Luk 18:40 And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, Luk 18:41 Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. Luk 18:42 And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. Luk 18:43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

You will observe that according to Luke's account we have travelled from Samaria and Galilee, in one chapter, *Luk 17:11 And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee*, coming to Jericho in Luke chapter 18:35. The map shows the journeys of Jesus unique to Luke's Gospel, and you can see that all the Gospels



differ in their recording of Jesus movements which, to me, makes a harmony of the Gospels extremely difficult.

In all probability we have made this last journey before the crucifixion, down the Jordan valley route to Jerusalem, and from Jericho ascending into Jerusalem. Jericho was the first Canaanite city that Joshua conquered as he went on to subdue the land of promise, and you remember that it was about 400 years before the Israelites subdued Jerusalem under king David. The King of Kings goes from Jericho straight way to Jerusalem, but does not stop there, for He is going onward to the heavenly Jerusalem, *Gal 4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*

Mark says that, *Mar 10:46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.* In Luke Jesus is said to be near to Jericho and in Mark He was going out of Jericho, but I think that they describe the same event, by which we know from Mark, that the blind man was called Bartimaeus. Matthew says that two men were healed, *Mat 20:30 And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.* I do not know why Matthew says that there were two Blind men, just as he says there were two demoniacs at Gadara, except that in Hebrew or Aramaic you emphasise something by making it plural or by repeating it.

What is the importance of this miracle, at this place, Jericho, and how does it fit in with the narrative? Bartimaeus addresses the Messiah as “*thou Son of David, have mercy on me*”. This is the second time that this phrase is used in Luke’s Gospel. The first is, *Luk 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. Luk 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David,* spoken by an angel and the second time by a blind man, Bartimaeus. Why does Bartimaeus use this phrase, “Son of David” and why does Luke record it?

David is another of those glimpses of the Messiah, that great conception which became reality in the person of Jesus, but a concept that was composed out of many people’s lives in the OT. David is one such Messiah, *Psa 89:19 Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. Psa 89:20 I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I **anointed** him: Psa 89:21 With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him.*

The anointed one is Messiah, as in, *Psa 18:50 Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed (מָשִׁיחַ) to David, and to his seed for evermore.* In the Greek at that place it uses τῷ χριστῷ, the Christ, so we could translate the verse (*Psa 17:51 LXX*) “*Great salvation will He give to His King, and shows mercy to His Christ and to his seed forever*” or “to His Messiah”.

As the anointed king, the first king of Judah, David is famous for defeating the Giant Philistine from Gath. What is not so much appreciated was that David by his action also defeated the army of the Philistine's, *1Sa 17:9 If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us..... 1Sa 17:51 Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. 1Sa 17:52 And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron. 1Sa 17:53 And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents.* This is like Christ's battle with the empires of man, *Rev 13:3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.*

David is raised to the forefront of prophecy 200 years after his death, and there begins the Christ type, in the shape of David, *Isa 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isa 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, **upon the throne of David**, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

The “key” of David was given to the keeper of the house of Hezekiah, who was Eliakim, *Isa 22:20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah: Isa 22:21 And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. Isa 22:22 And the **key of the house of David** will I lay upon his **shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.***

A key too big to carry in your hand, it was a key that you carried on your shoulder, a big responsibility to shoulder, as we say? I think that the “key of David” was the authority to open and shut, “**so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open**”, not that a key was necessary, but it symbolises the right of access to David’s house, David’s Kingdom, or as it became known, the Messiah’s Kingdom.

Simon Peter is granted this task over Christ’s house, not necessarily an eternal role, as many are given this honour, *Mat 16:17 Jesus answered, "You are blessed, **Simon son of Jonah**. No one taught you that. My Father in heaven showed you who I am. Mat 16:18 So I tell you, you are Peter. And I will build my church on this rock. The power of death will not be able to defeat my church. Mat 16:19 I will give you the keys to God's kingdom. When you speak judgment here on earth, that judgment will be God's judgment. When you promise forgiveness here on earth, that forgiveness will be God's forgiveness."* *Mat 16:20 Then Jesus warned his followers not to tell anyone he was the Messiah. ERV.* Jesus calls him blessed, and the son of Jonah, perhaps seeing in him a similar spirit as the OT prophet.

In Jeremiah the prophet there is a reference to the Messiah God, *Jer 23:5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. Jer 23:6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

In the time of this “David”, the nation would be united under God, *Jer 30:8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: Jer 30:9 But they shall serve the LORD their God, and **David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.** Jer 30:10 Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.....Jer 33:14 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised **unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.** Jer 33:15 In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. Jer 33:16 **In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely:** and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

The expectation of “David” brought with it the message that Judah and Israel would be saved. The nation that had been torn into two tribes at Solomon’s death, was to be again reunited under David, not in some “Christian era” future day, but in that day when David came, in Christ’s day.

We have a few more scriptures that speak of our coming hero, *Jer 33:20 Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; Jer 33:21 Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. Jer 33:22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: **so will I multiply the seed of David my servant**, and the Levites that minister unto me.*

There are other prophecies which are fulfilled in the NT, such as, *Eze 34:23 And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. Eze 34:24 And I the LORD will be their God, and **my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.....****Amo 9:11 In that day will I raise up **the tabernacle of David that is fallen**, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:.....**Zec 12:10 And **I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications**: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. Zec 12:11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. Zec 12:12 And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart;Zec 13:1 In that day there shall **be a fountain opened to the house of David** and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem **for sin and for uncleanness**.*

David, the King of the Jews was going to return but in what form and as who? Now perhaps we see a little more behind the remark of Bartimaeus, the background leading to the expectation of a Davidic figure. As soon as he hears it is Jesus of Nazareth, he shouts, “*Jesus, thou Son of David, **have mercy on me***”, but how did he know Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of David? Bartimaeus was blind, who could have told him this, how did he know the scripture so well and who read them to him? The spirit within him must have borne witness to him, and he cried yet more against those who would shut him up, “*Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me*”. He saw the son of David, better than those around him, who were blinkered by the flesh, and his mind was crystal clear who the

object of his affection was, he was not blind to the Son of David, and a cry for mercy **not** for forgiveness, came from his lips.

I think he already knew the forgiveness of sin, perhaps after an encounter with the Baptist, or he had known it as with the others of Jesus family, but it is certainly not forgiveness he cries for. He see in the Messiah, the Son of David, his spiritual eyes are open, he knows forgiveness. He is saved or made whole, but as we have observed not in the eternal sense yet, *Mat 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.* He cries for mercy to great David's greater Son and that is for mercy on his situation. He would follow the Master but he could not see to follow and the only reason that I see him wanting his sight is so that he could follow him, "*And immediately he received his sight, and **followed him***".

He went his way with Jesus, eventually to Jerusalem, the city that was once the Capital of the Jebusites, the last stronghold to fall to King David, the City of Zion. When David went up to take the city, his army was mocked for being no better than "blind and lame", and the invaders of David would be met by the same force of "blind and lame" from the Jebusites, so contemptuously did they look upon David's band. *2Sa 5:6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem, to the Jebusites, those dwelling in the land. And one spoke to David, saying, You shall not come in here except the blind and the lame will turn you away, saying, David cannot come in here. 2Sa 5:7 And David captured the stronghold of Zion. It is the city of David. 2Sa 5:8 And David said on that day, Anyone who strikes the Jebusite, approaching at the water shaft, let him capture the lame and the blind, the hated of the soul of David. On this account they say, The blind and the lame shall not enter into the house.* LITV.

David appears here in our narrative, at this time, to show us that He, Jesus the Messiah, is going up to conquer the city of the Jebusites, namely Jerusalem, but instead of Jebusites there are the conspirators of the priests, scribes, Sadducees and Pharisees, the equivalents to the Jebusites, and in the figure of David, goes Jesus. Jerusalem on earth would be conquered, it would give way to its antitype, the Jerusalem above which is the mother of us all.

Jesus said, Jerusalem, far from being the place on earth to worship, was no longer going to be viable, *Joh 4:21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, **when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.** Joh 4:22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. Joh 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.* Jesus said that, so why do men say that the

Temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem at some time in the future, and worship will be conducted there, when He, Jesus says “true worshippers” will not worship there? The same spirit, willing it to persist, dwells in the men who put these views forward, the spirit that dwelt in the Priests and Pharisees of those days, they just cannot give it up.

Jesus goes to Jerusalem, to fulfil his task and complete His mission, His Kingdom will not be of this world, *Luk 13:33 Yet I must be on my way today, tomorrow, and the next day; it is not right for a prophet to be killed anywhere except in Jerusalem. Luk 13:34 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets, you stone the messengers God has sent you! How many times I wanted to put my arms around all your people, just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not let me! Luk 13:35 **And so your Temple will be abandoned. I assure you that you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord.'**" GNB.*

You are looking in the wrong place if you think earthly Jerusalem is worth a hill of beans now.

162. Zacchaeus Luke 19: 1 - 10

Luk 19:1 And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Luk 19:2 And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. Luk 19:3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. Luk 19:4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. Luk 19:5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. Luk 19:6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. Luk 19:7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. Luk 19:8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. Luk 19:9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. Luk 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

The average height of a Jewish male was 5' 6" in Jesus day, so I would estimate that Zacchaeus was more than a “head” shorter than average because, “*he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, **because he was***”

little of stature", and that would put him around 4' 8" tall. For a different reason to Bartimaeus he was likewise compromised in his sight and prevented from seeing Jesus. Jesus heals some disabilities but some you can live with and being short was not something Zacchaeus couldn't work on.

I thought a lot about what Zacchaeus was like and I offer this guess of his person and personality. He was a Dani DeVito character, a bit of a wide boy, a little cheerful cheeky chappy, a man who could make you smile even though he robbed you, charismatic, with a mind sharp as a razor and never stuck for a word to say, self confident and a natural leader, charming though not physically attractive.

He was born a Jew, and that is why Jesus has a contact with him, *Mat 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: Mat 10:6 But go rather to **the lost sheep of the house of Israel***. Brought up in Judaism, he retained a little of his faith but found this career choice, as a tax man, better than manual labour to which he was not physically suited. He was a servant of Rome which put him at odds with the Jews.

As a child he was sidelined and perhaps bullied, until he got around the issue of size, by projecting himself as someone much "bigger" with more bravado than he actually had, so he was bolder and more daring, and by this subterfuge he came to be accepted by his peers. He may have given up on "religion" when he saw what the religious men were like. He had learned to watch people as a survival strategy, learned the strengths and weaknesses of men, he watched what people did and said, saw their reactions, got to know when they were lying, knew what a hypocrite was and saw in the synagogue system a falsehood of not doing what they aspired to, and he felt justified not hold too deeply his faith.

Small people compensate for their lack of height. As one of France's greatest military leaders, Napoleon Bonaparte led many successful campaigns during the French Revolution, building a large empire that dominated continental Europe. But ask anyone to tell you something about Napoleon and they will most likely refer to his height. So much so, the term 'Napoleon complex' or 'Small Man Syndrome' is commonly used to describe a condition where a man feels inadequate because of his height, overcompensating with overbearing behaviour and aggression.

It is believed shorter men are more prone to loud, ostentatious, even aggressive behaviour. Like Napoleon, they might have grandiose plans and ambitions, notoriously trying to achieve a dominating position. It is almost as if they are in

constant competition with other men, to prove their worth. To show that despite their small height they still offer value. This behaviour might become obsessive and prevent people from developing healthy relationships.

The Dictator Game is an economic game that is designed to question the standard economic assumption **that individuals will act solely out of self-interest**. The game is also used by psychologists to determine how people belonging to different groups and backgrounds will respond in this situation. It typically consists of two individuals, one of whom is given a quantity of money. The second individual is given nothing. The participant given the money, known in the experiment as 'the dictator', is told that he must offer some amount of that money to the second participant, even if that amount is zero. Whatever amount the dictator offers to the second participant must be accepted. The second participant, should he find the amount unsatisfactory, cannot then punish the dictator in any way.

Men (but not women) keep more resources for themselves when they feel small. When paired with a taller male opponent shorter men keep more resources to themselves in a game in which they have all the power (dictator game) versus a game in which the opponent also has some power (ultimatum game). Furthermore, shorter men are not more likely to show direct, physical aggression toward a taller opponent. As predicted by the Napoleon complex, relatively shorter men show greater behavioural flexibility in securing resources when presented with cues that they are physically less competitive.

Zacchaeus became a natural leader and that is why he was head tax collector. He had become rich on the backs of others, and all of his life he had got by on his wits and charisma, he was rich and he was an expert at exploiting people and there was not much left for him to achieve, maybe just more of the same. He may have come to a point in life where he was thinking of change, possibly retirement, like that other rich entrepreneur, *Luk 12:19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. Luk 12:20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? Luk 12:21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*

Or like the rich young ruler, *Luk 18:23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. Luk 18:24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!* He found a conflict within him about having so much, and the pleasure of getting money was wearing off, and he was no different to the donkey on a

treadmill. Surely there was more to life than getting and accumulating wealth, or at least wealth in the form of earthly treasure? Is this all that life had to offer, was this all that life was about?

Then comes into view Jesus, not that Zacchaeus knew Him, but he had heard of Him, and curiosity took hold of him and he was swept along with the crowd, but there was a problem that held him from seeing the Man, the problem of his height. So he thought around the problem and went ahead of Jesus to a sycamore tree, which is a fig producing plant, with great spreading boughs, and he climbed it and watched. He is a climber possibly, social definitely a fig tree and as Jesus came close he was amazed to be called by name, *Luk 19:5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.* How did this Man know his name?



He comes to a curious place in his life, a place where the whole of life changes, and I will call it the place of “conviction by association”. Zacchaeus is turned from his way to Christ and it is as if a switch had been thrown in his mind, the points changed so that instead of the rails going one way towards hell he goes on the rails to life. There was no other man involved in the process, he didn’t make a decision for Jesus but Jesus made a decision for him, and called him to Himself.

What had happened? He had come to his senses, the dark clouds covering his mind had been removed and he saw his predicament, we say that he had come to his senses. In some strange way, instantly, the man gets a new world view. It is I think similar to the demon possessed man at Gadara, *Luk 8:35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.* It wasn’t the demon possessed man that frightened the inhabitants, it was finding him in his right mind. You can, in this world, be as stupid and wild as you like and men will forgive you, but mention the name of Jesus and you are not welcome.

There is little difference in being possessed by devils and committing all the other sins against God, it is all part of the devil’s darkness that men inhabit, *Col 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

Then there comes a day when that power of darkness is broken and we change, *Rom 8:16 And the Spirit himself speaks to our spirits and makes us sure that we are God's children.* ERV. It is the moment of "conviction", as when Peter felt the overwhelming presence of Christ, *Luk 5:6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. Luk 5:7 And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. Luk 5:8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, **Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.***

Exactly what happens to a person differs when they meet Christ but all will have a conviction of sin that leads on to a second thing, repentance, and if a man has no repentance when he meets Christ, he goes away the same as he came, unchanged and unforgiven. *Luk 19:5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. Luk 19:6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him **joyfully.*** The change had already started because he received Him with happiness.

Now as I have already said, men don't like to see people change to love Christ but they also do not like Christ loving someone they think is a sinner, *Luk 19:7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, **That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.*** Some people are sinners, more than others, and we always judge people by ourselves, *Luk 18:11 The Pharisee stood over by himself and prayed, "God, I thank you that I am not greedy, dishonest, and unfaithful in marriage like other people. And I am really glad that I am not like that tax collector over there. CEV.* Yes we are the blind Pharisees. We are all of us, sinners, *Rom 3:9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; Rom 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

Either on the way to his house or after arriving, Zacchaeus shows his commitment to Jesus, and that he has turned from his ways, *Luk 19:8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, **I restore him fourfold.*** We seldom see this response to Christ when a person makes some sort of commitment to Christ, the physical component of repentance is forgotten, *Exo 22:4 If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; **he shall restore double.** Exo 22:5 If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution. Exo 22:6 If fire break out, and catch*

in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.

Restitution or restoration was part of the law of reconciliation. You could not come back to the family of Israel without restoration. It was not enough to say “sorry” and neglect the actual deprivation that you have caused. It was no use saying to Jesus, “I repent”, as if that makes all the issues go away, and that words are a substitute for the goods you have taken, or the people you have hurt. Clearly they do not. The injured party standing before you can ask why Christ forgives you, when you do not make the least effort to make it up with the injured person yourself, what crazy sort of forgiveness is that? It wasn’t Jesus’ ox that you stole it was your neighbour’s and he needs recompense. It wasn’t Jesus money you stole (not in the absolute sense) and the neighbour needs compensating.

The tax collector shows his genuine repentance by restoring “fourfold”, going far beyond the requirements of the Law, and additionally by giving half of his goods to the poor. He sees that it is not enough to “come to Jesus” for forgiveness and not show the genuine change in his life. He wanted to show what Jesus had done for him.

Now one thing that Jesus does not tell Zacchaeus to do is give up his day job. Tax collecting is one of the necessary evils of this life. It could be done in a Christian manner, so why give it up, and besides what a wonderful example he would become to those fellow tax collectors. The people would always select the honest official to get their receipts.

And what happened to Zacchaeus’ associates, the other tax men? I imagine that he still had influence but it was not so much as before. The Romans wanted their taxes and they weren’t too concerned about how they got them as long as they got them, and unless they were converted they would go on in the way that they were collecting.

For Zacchaeus, this was a new beginning, a chance for him to learn how to do things differently and how to make a difference in peoples lives. *Luk 19:9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. Luk 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.* Salvation in the form of Jesus had come to his home and he would follow Jesus.

Zacchaeus, according to tradition was elevated as one of the few who could be verified as being in heaven, along with the ‘thief’ on the cross next to Jesus. Later

Christian legend claimed that he became the first Bishop of Caesarea (Apostolic Constitutions, 7:46). He was elevated to sainthood by both the Eastern Orthodox and Western traditions. From tax collector to Bishop, and that is the strange nature of faith.

163. 10 Pounds Part 1 Luke 19: 11

Luk 19:11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

This parable is given because,

1. Jesus is near to Jerusalem and
2. The people thought the Kingdom of God was going to appear there and then.

This parable is a warning to all who will speculate on the coming Kingdom and the coming Messiah. It has a meaning that is not obvious and that is why we should give time to meditate upon it. It is given to the disciples and crowds that follow Jesus so that they might not be led astray by the speculators concerning the Kingdom and that they might be stayed up by the word of God. I remember how easily led astray I was by people whom I believed told the truth about Christ's coming, but if I am honest, I did not bother to find out if the things that men taught were in accordance with Scripture. I blindly followed men because I was too lazy to find out things for myself. I have always told you to study for yourself and never take what I say as true without scripture to back it up. Most of all never follow a man, and if he says that he alone has the way to salvation, run away from him.

This parable may be called “**Great Expectations**” because of the thought in the people's mind that all of this excitement would be leading towards some great event connected with Jerusalem and the Messiah. They were not wrong in their expectation only in the form that it took, and as such it stands as a “**Great Warning**”. As the excitement builds up that something is going to happen, so the speculation grows and there are always people who get the details of prophecy wrong, misinterpret the scripture, see in scripture what is not there, and so they are looking in the wrong direction for what is happening and for Christ. They have misinterpreted the signs of the times. In fact, looking for dates is stupid, which Paul says, *1Th 5:1 I don't need to write you about the time or date when all this will happen. 1Th 5:2 You surely know that the Lord's return*

*will be **as a thief coming at night**. 1Th 5:3 People will think they are safe and secure. But destruction will suddenly strike them like the pains of a woman about to give birth. And they won't escape. CEV.*

In other words there is not going to be a big sign that lights up and says, "Jesus is arriving on such a date and at such a time". It is just not given, *Luk 12:38 Those servants are really fortunate if their master finds them ready, even though he comes late at night or early in the morning. Luk 12:39 You would surely not let a thief break into your home, if you knew when the thief was coming. Luk 12:40 So always be ready! **You don't know when the Son of Man will come**. CEV.*

Yet despite this, there are plenty of men willing to persuade tens of thousands of people that they know the events surrounding the coming of Christ and that they have special revelation of this event. Let us not forget also that apart from these false prophets and teachers, there are tens of thousands of people gullible enough to be persuaded by them.

One such Baptist preacher, William Miller, persuaded his followers that the Lord was coming on the 22nd October 1844.

Stories of the event abound. Some members of the church neglected their farms and other affairs and sold their possessions, expecting to be drawn upward to heaven. Women who lived in or near Worcester, Mass., cut off their hair, gave away their jewellery and took the ruffles off their dresses. Many Millerites made long white gowns for themselves 'ascension robes' for the big day. Many who lived in Groton, Mass., climbed Mt. Wachusett to await the Second Coming. One old man from Harvard, Mass., couldn't make it up the mountain but he perched at the top of his tallest apple tree. A white-robed family in New Bedford also chose an apple tree to await the Lord's arrival.

In Maine, stories abounded about Millerites climbing to rooftops so they could be more easily lifted to the sky. In Camden Hills State Park, hikers still visit the Millerite Ledges, where Millerites went on October 22, 1844, to await ascension.

As many as 100,000 Christians gathered on hillsides, in meeting places and in meadows. They were breathlessly and joyously expecting the return of their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The crowds had assembled because of the prophetic claim of an upstate New York farmer and Baptist layman named William Miller (1782-1849). He

was certain from his studies of the Bible that Jesus Christ was going to return on that day.

The prophesied return date had arrived. The waiting crowds, gathered at various places, mainly throughout the Northeast United States, peered expectantly upward as the hours slipped away. Anxiety grew as nightfall descended. Then the midnight hour tolled and still Christ had not returned. People became ever more restless. Through the wee hours of darkness, the dejected and stunned crowds began to disperse. When the daylight of Oct. 23 arrived, it was clear that Christ was not going to return as expected.

This dashed hope came to be known as “The Great Disappointment.” In his book *When Time Shall Be No More*, historian Paul Boyer offers an example of the deep despondency suffered by the Millerites. In the words of one tragically disappointed believer: “Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before.... We wept, and wept, till the day dawned”.

When Jesus did not return as expected, many who had hopefully waited for the return of their Savior threw off their faith completely. Some refused to give up their hope and eventually replaced one delusion with another. They would claim that Christ must have come invisibly in 1844, moving into the Holy of Holies in heaven to begin his “investigative judgment” of Christian lives, the doctrine of a new cult called the Seventh Day Adventist’s.

Many simply returned to the churches out of which they had come, no doubt confused, distraught and embarrassed to have accepted something that was revealed to have been an empty fantasy. Miller, having renounced his prophecy studies after the Great Disappointment, died in 1849. Any remaining followers split up over differences of belief and doctrine. Ultimately, a variety of groups arose from the ashes of the Millerite camp, including the Jehovah’s Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists.

The answer to a failed prophecy is of course another prophecy, a sticking plaster, a fix to attempt to get around the problem. One was invented for Miller’s failure and it involved Jesus secretly coming to the tabernacle in heaven rather than on earth, which is all very well until you realise no one has seen this, but you have to believe in it. I prefer to believe the scripture which says, *Mat 24:25 Behold, I*

*have told you before. Mat 24:26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, **he is in the secret chambers**; believe it not. Mat 24:27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

America seems to be a fertile breeding ground for sects and strange ideas about prophecy, for example,

- **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormonism).** A very subtle, spiritual deception started in 1830 by Joseph Smith. This aggressively evangelistic group contends that it is the only true Church, and that all Christians outside Mormonism are following a deficient Gospel and a false Christ.
- **The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (Jehovah's Witnesses).** Militantly it holds to anti-historic Christian tenets. This group began in the 1870s with Charles Taze Russell. They not only deny the essentials of the Christian faith, but the control exercised over the membership is highly destructive.
- **The Church of Scientology.** A do-it-yourself salvation, science fiction group that masquerades as the true Church, lightly sprayed with a thin veneer of Christianity. Seeks to destroy through litigation and character assassination those who speak out against the group.
- **The Twelve Tribes.** This group began in the early 1970s with Elbert Eugene Spriggs. They claim that salvation can only be found by giving all possessions to them and living in their community. All personal decision-making power is given over to the leadership.
- **The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (Unification Church), or Moonies.** Founded in 1954 by Sun Myung Moon, this highly authoritarian and destructive group teaches that Jesus failed on the cross. Moon is now the mediator between God and man.
- **Christian Identity Movement (Aryan Nations, Christian Identity Church, Klu Klux Klan, etc.).** A loose-knit confederation of various small groups that are militantly anti-government and conspiracy driven. Each group holds differing, deviant Christian tenets. All hold to Caucasians being the descendants of the ten "lost" Tribes of Israel, God's true people.
- **United Pentecostal Church (UPC).** A highly controlling, legalistic group that was formed in 1945. This group denies the Trinity and teaches that in order to be saved one must be baptized in the name of Jesus only.

In addition there are more modern American cults,

- **The International Churches of Christ (Boston Movement).** This highly evangelistic group which began in 1978 with Kip McKean embraces most of the main tenets of the historic Church. Teaches that it is the only true Church and is highly authoritarian, with immense control over members' lives.
- **The Peoples Temple (1955 - 1978),** founded by Jim Jones, led the Peoples Temple, which ran a free clinic and a drug rehabilitation program. In 1974, the Peoples Temple leased land in Guyana, where the group would flee media scrutiny in the United States and set up an agricultural commune. By 1978, the population of "Jonestown" in Guyana had grown to around 900, but a few disillusioned members tipped off the American media of the armed compound in South America and rehearsals of mass suicide. In November 1978 Congressman Leo Ryan traveled to Jonestown where he, three journalists and one defector were shot and killed, before Jones ordered his followers to drink a cyanide-laced fruit drink, resulting the loss of 909 lives.
- **The Branch Davidians (1955 - 1993).** Although this extremist sect of the Seventh Day Adventists has been active since the 1950s, the Branch Davidians are best known for the 1993 standoff in Waco, Texas. David Koresh, the leader at the time, believed he was the Messiah and declared all women - including those underage or already married - his "spiritual wives." The group believed the apocalypse was imminent and, fearing its arrival, locked themselves into a sprawling compound. On February 28th, 1993 in what started as a shootout soon turned into a standoff between the Branch Davidians and the FBI. It lasted 51 days, and eventually ended when tanks were brought in: the compound was filled with tear gas and caught on fire, leaving more than 80 people dead.
- **Children of God - Family International (1968 - Present).** David "Moses" Berg founded this communist Christian offshoot in California in 1968. For someone so concerned with moral decay and evolution, Berg had a very sex-centric perspective on how to spread the views of Jesus, including reported recruitment through "flirty fishing" (i.e. using young women to lure in new members by having sex with them) and apparently opposing anti-pedophilia laws - according to some former members, having sex with children was not only permitted, but also a divine right. Berg was a master of propaganda, writing, publishing and distributing pamphlets discussing his teachings. The group changed its name several times - most recently to "Family International" in 2004 - and still exists today, operating in 80 countries, although no longer permits sex between adults and children. Actors Joaquin Phoenix and Rose McGowan were born into the cult and have since left and spoken out against the group.

- **Heaven's Gate (1972 - 1997).** Heaven's Gate - founded in San Diego in 1972 by Marshall Applewhite and Bonnie Nettles - was based on the premise that aliens would escort members of the group to the "Kingdom of Heaven" via extraterrestrial spacecraft. They first made headlines in 1975, when they convinced 20 new followers to give up their earthly possessions, leave their families and disappear. In March 1997, the group carefully planned and then executed a mass suicide, timed to coincide with the arrival of the Hale-Bopp comet, which members thought would conceal the alien spacecraft on its way to earth. Clad in black tunics and Nikes, 39 Heaven's Gate members ate applesauce mixed, chased a sedative with vodka, covered their heads in plastic bags and died. Nine of the 18 men - including Applewhite - had been surgically castrated, as the group mandated celibacy. An upbeat videotaped message made the members prior to the suicide indicated that they were willing - even happy - to die and move to the "next level."

You will observe a strongly controlling element in these cults, and that they say that "they" are the only way to get to heaven. They lean heavily towards a single person or persons, who interpret the Bible for them and even tells them what sermons they shall have on the same day. So controlling are these sects that they forbid members to read outside of their literature.

That is what happens today and it was happening in Jesus day. False prophets were everywhere, *2Pe 2:1 **Sometimes false prophets spoke to the people of Israel. False teachers will also sneak in and speak harmful lies to you. But these teachers don't really belong to the Master who paid a great price for them, and they will quickly destroy themselves.** 2Pe 2:2 Many people will follow their evil ways and cause others to tell lies about the true way. 2Pe 2:3 They will be greedy and cheat you with smooth talk. But long ago God decided to punish them, and God doesn't sleep.* CEV.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been mislead over the events surrounding the death of Christ and the coming kingdom, *Luk 19:11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.* Does a misunderstanding of these events mean that a person is not saved? Possibly, although it depends whether it is an error which is fatal to the faith of that individual. A boat may be badly damaged in a storm but go on floating whereas another boat might sustain a hole in it which makes it sink.

The doctrine of the second coming may contain elements which are speculative but do not impinge upon your salvation, as they are yet to come. But when your

speculation leads to a stripping away of the Glory that is due to Christ alone, when it turns of Him and says that He is a man and not God, when it affects His resurrection which is for our justification, then you have put a hole in your boat of salvation. *1Jn 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding. So now we can know the one who is true, and we live in that true God. We are in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and he is eternal life.*

But of course knowing what the Bible says is vastly different from experiencing it, and you MUST be born again to see the Kingdom of God.

164. 10 Pounds part 2 *Luke 19: 11 - 15*

Luk 19:11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. Luk 19:12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. Luk 19:13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. Luk 19:14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. Luk 19:15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

This parable is a warning to us, who think that the kingdom should immediately appear. It is not primarily about the gifts God has given us, the “ten pounds” or what use we make of them, but what our attitude is to the coming King and how we react to that. It is also written for the Jews (Christianity has not yet been established) although it does have a bearing on our attitudes as NT believers. We saw in the last ministry how many people have been deceived by their religion, we saw the Millerites and the “Great Disappointment” and perhaps more importantly, how they all downed tools and stood around doing nothing while looking for his coming and were disappointed by His absence and so many of them gave up their faith. So often do people worship what men have made rather than Jesus.

The story..... Our story begins with a certain nobleman going on a journey to receive a kingdom. The Greek word **εὐγένης** mean one who is high born, well bred, and interestingly has come down into our language as “eugenics”. Eugenics is the scientifically erroneous and immoral theory of “racial

improvement” and “planned breeding,” which gained popularity during the early 20th century. Eugenicists worldwide believed that they could perfect human beings and eliminate so-called social ills through genetics and heredity.

Well, this nobleman was naturally well bred, like Job, where the same word is used to describe him in the LXX, *Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. Job 1:2 And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. Job 1:3 His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest (εὐγένης) of all the men of the east.* I think that there is little doubt that Jesus is the nobleman and that no one else is intended to be the central character of this story.

This man in our story, this high born man, will soon be a king when he collects the deeds and title of his kingdom and so he goes on a journey to his coronation, and receives his kingdom. This was true of the way one was called before the Emperor, to take up his position of rule. As Geldenhuys relates,

The following parable is rich in historical allusions. “The Saviour probably derived the details of this parable from the actual history of Archelaus, the son of Herod, who after his father’s death went to Rome to receive the sovereignty over part of his father’s kingdom in accordance with the intentions of his father’s testament. Its confirmation by the Roman Emperor was necessary, because Herod’s empire in reality formed part of the Roman Empire. A Jewish deputation at that time also went to Rome to dispute Archelaus’s claim to kingship, but the emperor nonetheless appointed him as ruler (though not as a full sovereign king) over half of his father’s kingdom.”

As the nobleman goes on his way, some of the citizens send after him to say they will not accept his reign over them, because they hated him. This rebellion occurs after he has left, perhaps because they were too cowardly to say it to his face. We perceive from this that the ruler is in a contentious position with regards to these other citizens, but he is in the role of a prince, and as a prince he leaves but as a king he returns.

How do we see this parable? Do the events of which Jesus speaks, occur at this time or in some future day? Does it only speak to the Jews of Jesus day, or does it refer to a time a bit later on when Judaism merges into Christianity, or does it refer to the end of time and the Final Judgment? The events certainly have

immediacy about them. For example, the citizens hating Him, *Luk 19:14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.* This agrees with the shouts of the Jerusalemites before the crucifixion, *Luk 23:20 Pilate wanted to set Jesus free, so he spoke again to the crowds. Luk 23:21 But they kept shouting, "Nail him to a cross! **Nail him to a cross!**"* And also the passage, *Luke 19:12 A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return,* agrees with the peoples reaction to Jesus entry into Jerusalem, *Luk 19:38 They shouted, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory to God."* The Romans put the title over His head, *Mat 27:37 And set up over his head his accusation written, **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.***

Against the idea of the immediacy of Christ's coming as King, there is His coming as King at the end of the age, *1Co 15:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 1Co 15:24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 1Co 15:25 **For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.** 1Co 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*

I tend to come down on the side of the nearness of Christ's coming in this parable, and that it is not confined to the "last day", *"And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear"*. We shall explore this when we have examined the rest of the parable.

The nobleman does something before he leaves, he gives ten of his slaves ten minas between them, one mina each. The word mēnē (Aramaic: מְנָא; Hebrew: מִנָּה), also mina, is an ancient Mesopotamian unit of weight for gold or silver and one of the earliest written words for **money**. The mēnē, like the shekel, was also a unit of currency, possibly the word goes back to "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN". The nobleman leaves them with an exhortation to "occupy" until he returns from his coronation. The word occupy is a translation of **πραγματεύομαι**, which means to be pragmatic, to deal with things sensibly and realistically and in a way that is based on practical rather than theoretical considerations. The root of the Greek is **πράσσω** a primary verb to practise.

It is said that the noblemen gave them ten minas or ten pounds, but the Lord does not give actual money to His earthly servants and we are left to consider just what is it the Lord has given to His men that they have practise with? What could the minas be? The "ten pounds" could be the gifts of the Spirit, but these gifts have not yet been given, because Christ has not ascended and this would

not make any sense to the Jews listening, so I do not think that the “pounds” are the gifts of the Spirit.

The “ten pounds” might be the individual abilities to conduct the king’s affairs in this life, but these “life” gifts are different, and you could be a housewife, a mechanic, a baker, a soldier and so on, but the “pounds” are the gifts given to the ten slaves, and they all get the same amount. For this reason I do not think the “pounds” are life gifts.

The nobleman gave the ten slaves something of His, something to be pragmatic with, to practice with, and He gave them something of value to keep until He returned. Who do the “ten slaves” represent and why ten, and not twelve, or seventy, or four and twenty? We are trying to see the meaning of this parable which is a story with a spiritual meaning and we have arrived at the point of determining “what is the spiritual meaning of the ten slaves and what is the meaning of the ten pounds which they were given”?

The simplest idea and one which springs to mind straight away is the parallel between the number of the commands given by God, *Deu 4:13 And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even **ten commandments**; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.* “Ten” is the basis of the covenant and the rules of life, and they were given to every Jew keep, *Lev 22:31 Therefore shall ye keep my commandments, and do them: I am the LORD.* The “ten pounds” given to the ten slaves, have a parallel in the “the ten commands” given to all Israel to have and to hold for all time, and to bring other men to hold them too. Thus to the men who kept them, and worked with them, they are rewarded in kind with a rule over cities. The obedience to the law bought rule over cities.

What is the connection between the things given by the nobleman, the “ten pounds”, the things which the obedient servants put into practice, and the rewards given for service to the master, and the close proximity of the kingdom, particularly in the light of Jesus conclusions to the story, *Luk 19:26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. Luk 19:27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.*

Is this parable a warning of the coming Kingdom, a warning that it is imminent, or is it warning of something else, *Luk 19:11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, **because he was nigh to Jerusalem**, and because*

they thought that **the kingdom of God** should immediately appear. Is it a warning to be in readiness for that kingdom whenever it comes?

The parable has not led us to any thoughts on the nature or appearance of the kingdom, which we would have thought it would and which would have shown itself in Jesus concluding words to the parable, *Luk 19:26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. Luk 19:27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.* But it has focused our minds on what we are occupied in at present and how we are to be doing what the ruler told us to do, and what he will do to us if we are not engaged on his business.

The parable concentrates on the diligence of the servants or slaves, as does the parable of the talents, *Mat 25:14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. Mat 25:15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.* We concentrate on what the “Talents” and the “pounds” mean, instead of the use of what Christ gives to us. Both of these parables relate to the same thing, that is, “are you taking Christianity seriously or are you just ticking along, not really caring much about it in your busy lives?” Are you serious about Christ especially in view of His coming Kingdom, *Luk 19:11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because **they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.***

The same thought is conveyed by Mark, *Mar 13:34 For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Mar 13:35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Mar 13:36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. Mar 13:37 **And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.***

He is not telling us to “watch” tomorrow or the day after, but watch now, today, for the Lord can come at any time, and He will come for you, in the midst of you feasts and weddings, and when you least expect it, death will call you. No one is exempt from the suddenness of Christ coming for us, *Luk 12:41 Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? Luk 12:42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due*

season? *Luk 12:43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Luk 12:44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.*

Had they not been listening? Where is the Kingdom? The Kingdom is within you, it comes without observation, *Luk 17:20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, **The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:** Luk 17:21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, **the kingdom of God is within you.*** It is not of this world, it does not come on this failed planet earth, *Joh 18:36 Jesus answered, **My kingdom is not of this world:** if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Joh 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*

The anticipating of the Kingdom of Heaven appearing on Earth by those Jewish contemporaries of Jesus, was just not going to happen, as Jesus told them in Luke 17:20-21, in fact Christ's Kingdom does not even appear until this earth is destroyed, *2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.* For the heavenly kingdom, a new earth is required, *Rev 21:1 And I saw **a new heaven and a new earth:** for the first heaven and **the first earth were passed away;** and there was no more sea. Rev 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, **coming down from God out of heaven,** prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Rev 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

So instead of looking for some earthly event, the disciples must be content with doing the Masters will, and we must be content also, not trying to see in detail the events surrounding the Messiahs coming, *Act 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.* It will happen and come to pass but will we be found doing His will?

165. The Character of the Lord *Luke 19: 16- 27*

Luk 19:16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. Luk 19:17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. Luk 19:18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. Luk 19:19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. Luk 19:20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: Luk 19:21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. Luk 19:22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Luk 19:23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? Luk 19:24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. Luk 19:25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) Luk 19:26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. Luk 19:27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

This parable is written as a warning, *Luk 19:11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because **they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear***. Yet as we saw, the parable contains nothing about the Kingdom of God appearing. It does however contain a warning about not using what the Lord has given to men and that they will account for it. In fact the parable contains far more verses explaining what the nobleman will do to his servants, for good and bad, than he does about the Kingdom of God appearing.

We suggested that the Lord was correcting the view that the Kingdom would appear and that it was more important to be found doing, than idly looking, *Luk 12:43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Luk 12:44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.*

In fact one servant or slave had multiplied his master's goods *tenfold*, *Luk 19:16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. Luk 19:17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.* Another had multiplied it fivefold, *Luk 19:18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. Luk 19:19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.*

There is no word of rebuke that one servant got a fivefold increase and that he should have got a tenfold increase not a fivefold increase, but a hearty well done to both men. The men multiplied what was given them and that satisfied the Lord, no matter how much. Another servant had taken what he was given, the pound or mina, wrapped it up in a handkerchief and kept it to give back unused, *Luk 19:20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: His excuse was, Luk 19:21 For I feared thee, because thou art **an austere man**: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.*

This is quite remarkable, for you would have thought that a servant, who had such an insight into his master character, would be commended and not vilified. That servant “feared” him and knew he was “austere”, and he seemingly had a right attitude. But his knowledge became his excuse to do nothing ,not to act.

Here I would like to bring in the parable of the talents, which is an identical story, although it varies slightly, *Mat 25:14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.* I think that Jesus told the stories many times and that He varied them as He told them to different audiences on different occasions, but it was essentially the same story. A story of a man travelling to a far country, a story of the man distributing his goods, a story of the man returning and reckoning with his servants, and a story about the servant who didn’t make any gains but hid the Masters substance.

Let us just read the parable of the Talents and see how the man deals with the servant who gained nothing, *Mat 25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: Mat 25:25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. Mat 25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Mat 25:27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.* It is almost exactly the same as the parable of the “ten pounds”.

Let us go a bit further and compare it with another parable, *Mat 13:19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. Mat 13:20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Mat 13:21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for*

when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. Mat 13:22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. Mat 13:23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

That has a lot of similarities with the talents and the pounds. They are all stories about the individual increasing in wealth or fruit, growing as time goes by, certainly growing in the Lord. The person who follows the instructions of the Lord will grow in stature, enough to be trusted, not with a few “pounds”, not with a few “talents”, but with true riches, *Luk 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. Luk 16:11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, **who will commit to your trust the true riches?** Luk 16:12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?*

We have the comparisons.

Talents	Pounds	Seed
The “hard” σκληρός man	The “austere” αὔστηρός nobleman	The Sower
5 gained 5	1 gained 10	Fruit 100 fold
2 gained 2	1 gained 5	Fruit 30 and 60 fold
1 stored it in a hole	1 stored in a handkerchief	Cares of the world took it and it withered
The man with 1 talent is useless and cast into outer darkness	The citizens did not want him and they are killed	The devil catches it away and it dies

It is not instantaneous growth, but growth over the lifetime of a soul, until the master comes, until the harvest of the grain, and then comes the reckoning with the Lord. This is where we should take note of the descriptions given of the man who gave the talents, and the nobleman who gave the pounds. It is not what we would expect, where men have a liberal view of the Messiah, a view that anything goes, and He is always smiling at you with words of forgiveness even though you have no care for His truth.

In the talents, He is called a **hard** man, in the pounds, He is called an **austere** man. Hard and austere are not words you would have used to describe the Lord. The Lord is severe in manner or appearance, uncompromising, strict, forbidding,

and both words imply the same thing, in modern parlance, “You do not mess with Me”, Num 14:18 *The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and **by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.*** Nothing has changed from the OT to the NT, and these qualities are still present.

James and Paul stress this also, Jas 5:10 *Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, **for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.*** Jas 5:11 ***Behold, we count them happy which endure.*** Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that **the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy**.....Rom 11:19 *Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.* Rom 11:20 *Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:* Rom 11:21 *For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.* Rom 11:22 ***Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God:*** on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. Rom 11:23 *And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.*

I personally, feel this austere side of God very much, and I think that because we live in a time of lawlessness and Christ hating, we should watch that we are not swept up into this liberal way of thinking. The time for a jokey, carefree Christianity, laughing and dancing as it goes lower and lower in its ignorance, is not suitable to the times we live in, or any time.

What of the talents and pounds? People mither over what they could be, and the list is endless, and you can satisfy yourself that it is right what you interpret them to be. But there is no clear statement as to what the talents, pounds, wheat actually translate into. There is no scripture that pins them down, so you could say it is this or that. I think that is because it would restrict us in our object of serving Christ.

They are anything and everything, not limited or constrained by a mere man's thinking, but in everything constrained by the Lord's thinking. The talents, the pounds, the wheat are all of the things that we are to do for Jesus because He has come into our lives, whatever He has asked of us, in every sphere of our lives, wherever occasion offers the chance. In my personal behaviour, especially my behaviour to others, in the deeds I do in public and in the secret recesses of my mind, and my thoughts are even more of an indicator of what I am like.

Are you sure that the Lord is only concerned how you perform in one area? You may behave as a Christian to your work colleagues, but are you a Christian in your home? Is the Lord going to award you a prize for being half a Christian? You may speak the words of Christ to some people but is your behaviour consistent, and when you go out with your associates you lapse into their ways and the foul language and behaviour which is not fitting for a Christian, and do we think we will be rewarded for our half hearted approach to Christ?

We love our brothers and sisters, but do we go out of our way to love the unlovely, to make friends with our enemy, to be Christ to ALL men? We can be intensely loyal to our team and neglect every other team, be blindsided to the needs of others, not even thinking about what it is like living in their shoes, and for this selfish attitude, do we hope for a reward? Do we hope to hear “good and faithful servant? Do we think that we will all be carrying the 10 pounds for good achievement or have we just laid the pound up in a handkerchief hoping that God will not notice our failure?

And for those who like ceremony and think the God should be served by such as they, and they say, “I am called into the ministry”, and with fine words make captivating speeches, and they put on a solemn face and bow and scrape before a piece of wood that they have made, let them take note. Saul was happy to drive sheep in the Lord’s direction, bleating and baaing, and making a lot of noise, hoping that the Lord would be pleased with his sacrifice, because he did it with good intent, but listen to what God said, *1Sa 15:14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? 1Sa 15:15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.....1Sa 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? **Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.** 1Sa 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.*

Saul was not right with God on the inside, and people who look to the externals of worship rather than internals had better note, *Joe 2:13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.* That bastion of paedophilia, the catholic church, leads by a very wicked example, and says, “don’t do what I do, do what I say” and thereby deceives her people.

And the person so full of good works that they bubble over, but has no time for study and certainly no time for the Lord and His people, what is their talent for? Mat 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Mat 23:24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. These people did good things but never in the Name of Christ, Mat 25:45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. Christ was not at the centre of their works.

Christ said “Follow Me”, and if we do it means to follow Him in ALL things, not just in our work, in morality, in home life, but in everything. You cannot be a half Christian, half in the world and half out of the world. We either serve Christ or we do not serve Christ, so let us stop deceiving ourselves.

You see, all of the things which we think are Christ’s gifts to us and signs of His favour, and that we mark down as our talents and pounds, are nothing without Him. Christ’s gifts come from Him with He Himself in them, and they are to serve Him first and foremost, and if He is not in anything we do it is worthless, *Rom 11:35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? Rom 11:36 **For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.***

That is why the elders cast their crowns down at Christ’s feet, *Rev 4:10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and **cast their crowns before the throne.*** We give to Him what he lent to us.

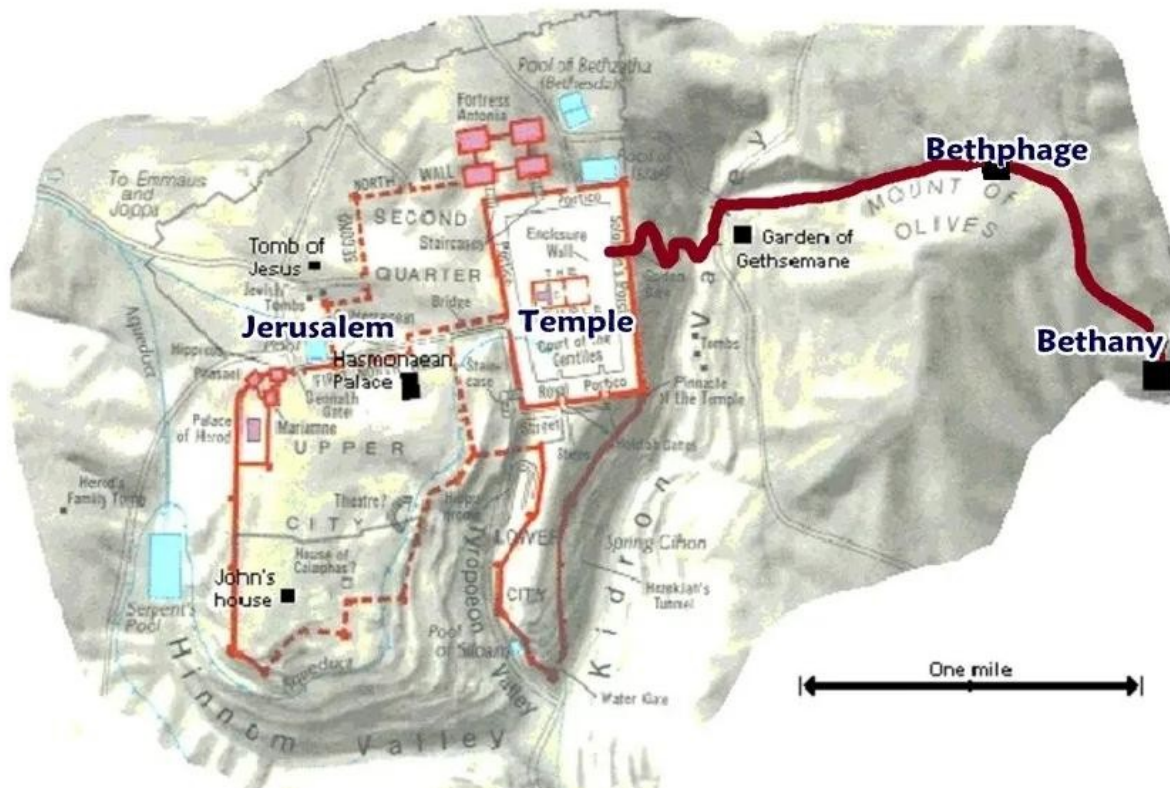
166. The Lord has Need *Luke 19: 28 - 34*

Luk 19:28 And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem. Luk 19:29 And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, Luk 19:30 Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. Luk 19:31 And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him. Luk 19:32 And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. Luk 19:33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? Luk 19:34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

Jesus has just come from Jericho, some 14 miles, along a route which climbs through waddis and hills up to the summit, at the Mount of Olives, a climb of about 9 hours, coming from 800 feet below sea level to 2700 feet above sea level. He may well have travelled in the cool of the night to make the climb more comfortable. So we are now entering the events which mark the last week of Jesus ministry, and on which all four Gospels agree. The different accounts provide some interesting insights as to what was happening.

A third of the Gospels is devoted to the last week of the ministry of Jesus:

- A third of Matthew, from Matthew chapter 21-28
- A third of Mark, from Mark chapter 11-16
- A quarter of Luke, from Luke chapter 19-24
- Nearly half of John, from John chapter 12-20



It was at this point of the conjunction of the Gospels that I thought it would be good to get a collective timeline of the events of the last week. So I had a look for a suitable chart, but it became clear as I looked, that the timelines differed slightly from each other and that most probably there is not enough information there to do one definitive timeline. The Gospel writers have their own purpose in

writing and so from their individual perspectives there is no reason to tie the Gospels together neatly, so I have left the timeline out.

We always start the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem as supposedly being on a Sunday, and that is one week before the resurrection. That is tradition and there are no grounds for it, and they never had a “Sunday” then, so “Palm Sunday” is an invention and we don’t know exactly what day it was. Jesus entered into Jerusalem after coming to Bethphage and Bethany and we have the statement of John that it was six days until the Passover, *Joh 12:1 Then Jesus **six days before the passover** came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. Joh 12:2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.* That is the verse that gives us an approximate fix about Jesus’ timetable, because it tells us the day when He came to Lazarus’ house.

This date also fixes the day of the week of the Crucifixion of Jesus, that is, “six days before the Passover”, He went to Bethany and after six days He was killed. But what was the day? If we say Jesus was killed on Friday, then six days before that is the Sunday, but was He killed on the Friday? The question is was Friday the day of the Passover?

The Passover happens to be a variable feast, depending when the new moon occurred and so it could be on any day of the week, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc. It occurs on 14 Nissan, *Lev 23:4 These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. Lev 23:5 In **the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S passover.** Lev 23:6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. Lev 23:7 In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. Lev 23:8 But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.*

On what day of the week was this Passover? The Hebrew months are lunar months and all have 29 or 30 days and can begin on any day of the week. The lunar cycle is very close to 29.5 days. Because the Hebrew calendar is a lunar calendar it only has 354 days not 365 days. Because of this Passover moves earlier, from spring towards winter, about 11.25 days each year. Every two or three years the Hebrew calendar adds an extra 30 day month which jumps Passover later in the year, towards summer and away from spring.

The Sabbath was regularly held on the evening of the Friday and so is a fixed festival, but the Passover was not regular. So why is Jesus said to be crucified on a Friday, tradition again. We have a further complication in the Jewish calendar based on Lunar cycles, which began the day in the evening at Sunset, and the Roman, the Julian calendar which began at midnight. In order to create a more standardized calendar, Julius Caesar consulted an Alexandrian astronomer named Sosigenes and created a more regulated civil calendar, a solar calendar based entirely on Earth's revolutions around the Sun. I shall examine this further later on as it does cause confusion.

It does not affect the event or efficacy of the Crucifixion to hold the exact day of the week in doubt and we shall return to this later.

Mark's Gospel account is almost identical to Luke's account, *Mar 11:1 And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, Mar 11:2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him. Mar 11:3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither. Mar 11:4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. Mar 11:5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? Mar 11:6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.*

Why didn't Jesus just continue walking and why did He stop to get a colt? It was of course to fulfil a scripture. If Jesus had been like we are, in not obeying scripture, He would have thought, "it doesn't matter if I do not do it" or "it can wait and I'll do it later", and then the story would not be following the script, and Jesus would not be doing the Father's will. He does it to fulfil the prophecy of Zechariah, *Zec 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.* We find this important detail included in Matthew's Gospel..

*Mat 21:1 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Mat 21:2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. Mat 21:3 And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. Mat 21:4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Mat 21:5 **Tell ye***

the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. Mat 21:6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,

(See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_106lfO6Kc0 Zechariah The Bible project.) 500 years earlier, Zechariah had given this prophecy about a coming King riding upon a donkey. The King was a deliverer but just what the people puzzled it to be, is not clear. There appeared confusion and doubt over His person, so that many “did not walk with Him”, and it was hidden from them, *Luk 18:32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: Luk 18:33 And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. Luk 18:34 **And they understood none of these things:** and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.* There was excitement among the people, for all the wrong reasons.

This is a different coming of the Messiah, as King to Jerusalem, than the one in the book of Revelation, the final coming in glory, *Rev 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. Rev 19:12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. Rev 19:13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. Rev 19:14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.* There He is shown on a white Horse, here in Jerusalem, He is seen on a donkey, and there could not be a greater lack of correspondence between the two.

It is as if He is sacredly mocking His final victory, or at least parodying it. After all the miracles He did, perhaps this would be another miracle of deliverance, as when the Assyrians under Rabshakeh besieged Jerusalem, in the time of Hezekiah, *2Ki 19:35 And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.* It would be a stunning victory without a fight, if He were to do this, and so He can come on a donkey, an animal signifying peace and prosperity, not on a war horse. But they were wrong.

This is not coming to the Temple on earth to take it captive for the Lord, this is not a final victory over the devil and his hordes, but a casual and joyous departure from this earthly station, to the Heavenly Jerusalem. It is the start of the Exodus “which He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem”. The cry of the

people “Hosannah” which means “Save now”, was said in expectation of deliverance. When Jesus left the Temple for the last time, the curtain was torn from top to bottom, and He never came back to an earthly Temple, rather He left it to the Romans to complete the destruction, as He said to the people on that entry to Jerusalem, *Luk 19:43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, Luk 19:44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*

The fourth Gospel of John casts even more light on these events, *Joh 12:14 And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Joh 12:15 Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. Joh 12:16 **These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.** Joh 12:17 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. Joh 12:18 **For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.** Joh 12:19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.*

The miracle at Bethany, the last miracle of John's Gospel had been another cause for the crowd to gather and welcome Him into the city. This miracle of the raising of Lazarus must have just occurred, for it was fresh news, “**for that they heard that he had done this miracle**”, it was not done weeks or months ago when it would have lost its meaning. And of course there is the anointing of Jesus by Mary which occurred in Bethany about this time. There are a lot of important events going on.

There is something that links King David to this event. He is thrust out of the city and takes the path to the Mount of Olives, *2Sa 15:29 Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there. 2Sa 15:30 And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up. 2Sa 15:31 And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. 2Sa 15:32 And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head: 2Sa 15:33 Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden*

unto me: 2Sa 15:34 But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

David was deposed in the rebellion of Absalom, and he left the city. His return was via Gilgal, and we presume he went up to Jerusalem by the same route, *2Sa 19:15 So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.* It does not say anything about his entry into Jerusalem, because it was ignominious, but David's greater son would make a more glorious entry.

167. The Coming of the Lord *Luke 19: 35 - 38*

Luk 19:35 And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. Luk 19:36 And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. Luk 19:37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; Luk 19:38 Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

We continue with Luke's account of the events in the last week before the crucifixion, with the arrival in Jerusalem. Going down the slope of the Mount of Olives, across the brook Kidron and up again through the eastern gate (the Golden Gate closed permanently by Saladin) and then up to the Temple. There Jesus would have the final showdown with the authorities that would lead to the death sentence being pronounced upon Him.

How did Jesus become the official public enemy of the religious establishment? Both John the Baptist and Jesus were not part of the religious elite that held sway over the national religion of Judaism. Both men had not attended any formal religious training and we might say today that they hardly had an education, and certainly not an official qualification from an academic establishment, a university or college. Yet here they were preaching a new Gospel and some people were following them and becoming their disciples.



Why didn't the High Priest and his fellow religious leaders, the Scribes and the Pharisees just ignore Jesus as an irrelevance and carry on with business as normal, why did they feel so threatened by this Jewish craftsman (τέκτων) son of Joseph? There are a number of reasons why they felt threatened, and one is given after Lazarus is raised from the dead, *Joh 11:45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. Joh 11:46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. Joh 11:47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. Joh 11:48 **If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.** Joh 11:49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Joh 11:50 **Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.** Joh 11:51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; Joh 11:52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. **Joh 11:53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.***

They felt that their position was threatened and that if the Jews got behind Jesus, the Romans would clamp down upon them. I think that they saw the "Jesus movement", as being some sort of earthly liberation army and in this had totally misread Jesus Mission. In fact, it becomes clear to Pilate, the Roman governor, that Jesus has no intention of forcing an earthly kingdom upon them, *Joh 18:35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Joh 18:36 Jesus answered, **My kingdom is not of this world:** if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Joh 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Joh 18:38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, **he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.***

The religious leaders saw Jesus as ruining their monopoly on religion. It is like the established religions of our day, like the church of England, worth £9bn, and in the past a willing participant in slavery, and more recently an investor in arms dealing, being compromised through its elite constitutional position. They saw Jesus as undermining their cosy little agreements with Rome, the "you give to me

and I will give to you” arrangement, whereby both profited from the ordinary people, the Jews who they were supposed to serve.

The priesthood of Judea lived in luxury well beyond that of the average man. They supported their lavish lifestyles with a temple tax which every Jew was required to pay. Richard Horsley in his book “The Message and the Kingdom” describes what archaeologists have discovered about the living conditions of the priesthood.

“...impressive archaeological remains of their Jerusalem residences show how elegant their life style had become. In spacious structures unhesitatingly dubbed ‘mansions” by the archaeologists who uncovered them in the 1970’s, we can get a glimpse of a lavish life in mosaic floored reception rooms and dining rooms with elaborate painted and carved stucco wall decorations and with a wealth of fine tableware, glassware, carved stone table tops, and other interior furnishings and elegant peristyles (a colonnade surrounding a building or court).”

The priests lived lavish lifestyles while the average Jewish peasant struggled to survive. The temple taxes combined with taxes imposed by Herod and Rome were literally threatening the existence of the Jewish people. The people of the land were carrying a burden they could scarcely bear or tolerate. Palestine had become a powder keg waiting to ignite.

The priesthood was undoubtedly jealous of Jesus’ popularity, but their main motivation for seeking to kill Jesus was fear. When a new king came to power, he would set his version of the priesthood in place. All this talk of Jesus becoming the new king undoubtedly unnerved the priests in Jerusalem. If Jesus came to power, they thought they would be out of a job or killed. And the Romans did not take too kindly to unauthorized kings. In their opinion, Jesus was inviting the wrath of Rome. They did not understand that Jesus’ kingdom was not of this world and his priesthood was not according to flesh and blood.

This article by Doug Reed explains who the other religious leaders were in Jesus day,

The Pharisees were very zealous for the Law of Moses, but they also considered themselves the guardians of the oral traditions that scholars developed over generations. The oral traditions interpreted

the Law of Moses. For example, the Law said to keep the Sabbath. They were not to work on God's holy day. Yet, what was work and what was not?

The oral traditions filled in the details that Moses left out. For instance, how far could a person walk on the Sabbath without it being work? The interpreters decided that the distance was 2000 cubits which is about 2/3 of a mile. This was known as a Sabbath's day journey. Where did they get that number? When the Hebrews carried the Ark of the Covenant in the wilderness, God commanded them to walk 2000 cubits behind the ark. They decided that was God's way of telling them how far one could walk on the Sabbath. *Jos 3:3 And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Jos 3:4 Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore.*

The conflict that is about to break out between Jesus and the religious leaders, between the Pharisees, Scribes, the priests who were the Sadducees, was undermining the supposed authority of those men and as the believers said later on in the book of Acts, *Act 4:25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? Act 4:26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. Act 4:27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, Act 4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.*

This conflict was going to unfold, and is documented by Luke and we see this in the structure of his Gospel. Firstly it is seen in the "cleaning of the Temple", or more properly the throwing out of all of that which "bought and sold", which was a rebuke against all of the religious leaders who had forgotten what the Temple was for, *Isa 56:5 Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a **place and a name** (yad vashem) better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Isa 56:6 Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Isa 56:7 Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, **and make them joyful in my house of prayer**: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; **for mine house***

shall be called an house of prayer for all people. Isa 56:8 *The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.*

Jesus then turns upon the leaders and systematically destroys any credibility that they had. He goes after,

1. The chief priests and scribes, who challenged him on “the baptism of John”.
2. The chief priest and the scribes, with the parable of the “Wicked tenants”, *Luk 20:19 And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them. Luk 20:20 And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.*
3. The Pharisees and Herodians, who asked Him whether He paid taxes to Caesar, *Mar 12:13 And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words. Mar 12:14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?*
4. The Sadducees, who were the priests, who did not believe in the life after death.
5. The scribes, who are to be particularly avoided.
6. There is also a teaching as to what is going to happen to the Temple, Jerusalem and the Nation, as a result of this.

The confrontation had ratcheted up, because as Jesus goes in to the Temple, and it is the first time that He publicly acknowledges His Kingship, and the people cry, “*Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest*”, which similar words were said at His birth, *Luk 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Luk 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

The significance of this would not have escaped the attention of the Jews, *Mal 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and **the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant**, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. Mal 3:2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? **for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:** Mal 3:3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he*

shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. Mal 3:4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years. Mal 3:5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts

The triumphal entry is followed by the removal of the money changers and sellers of sacrifice, “*And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. Mal 3:4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years*”.

Now we should not forget that this “Temple”, this earthly place of meeting with God, was an image of heaven, *Heb 8:5 **Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things**, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. Heb 8:6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.*

The reality was in heaven and the Jews just looked through the sacred objects on earth to the objects in heaven, “through a glass darkly”. Jesus went through all the actions that scripture had before written of Him, as part of that earthly service and worship. But the true value of His actions lay in heaven, *Heb 9:23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. Heb 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*

It was not that He was acting out a play, a scripted show for the people, it was real, and Jesus was leading them from the shadows to the light of glory of His Father's Kingdom in heaven. It was the continuity between the OT and that which was to come, the New Covenant. He was the King of the Jews, as Pilate had written of Him, He was a King, but not of this earth. The realm of the earthly was transforming into the heavenly, and if the Jews were coming with Him, they had better make up their minds which Kingdom they belonged to.

168. It Will End in Tears *Luke 19: 38 - 44*

Luk 19:39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. Luk 19:40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. Luk 19:41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Luk 19:42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. Luk 19:43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, Luk 19:44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

As King Jesus goes into the Temple at Jerusalem, with all the emblems of peace, the palms, strewn at His feet, amongst all the clamour of rejoicing and shouting of “Hosanna”, a group of Pharisees ask Jesus to keep the noise down, and ask Jesus to rebuke the happy disciples

It is like when King David bought the Ark of the Covenant in to Jerusalem, *2Sa 6:13 And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings. 2Sa 6:14 And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. 2Sa 6:15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.* They ALL bought the Ark of the Covenant into the city because they all bought Jesus the Messiah in to the City.

But the voice of dissent was heard, and it was David's wife, the Kings wife, who declaimed him, *2Sa 6:20 Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! 2Sa 6:21 **And David said unto Michal, It was before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD.** 2Sa 6:22 And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour. 2Sa 6:23 Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.*

The words of David to Michal, were the words of Christ to the Pharisees, “***It was before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD.***” On such a joyous occasion, you just could not avoid the atmosphere of unfettered rejoicing, it was irrepressible, why, the stones would cry out if you were to put a dampener on these happy people.

Here we see another characteristic of the Pharisees, that they were cold in their religion, with no joy, only the consideration of the hard cold laws of men. Their stony hearts could not respond unlike those stones scattered about Jerusalem. There was more rejoicing in the stones of the Temple than in the Pharisees. I also think that the Pharisees were afraid that such a demonstration of emotion were made, it would attract the attention of the Roman, as Caiaphas had said, and, *Joh 11:48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.* They would lose their religious freedoms.

Jesus shows a genuine concern for Jerusalem, an empathy that leads Him to tears. He looks upon God’s handiwork that has not followed the paths of righteousness that through the generations has debilitated and metamorphosed into an ugly caricature of what He had intended it to be. It might be a magnificent structure, almost as God had intended, but built by the murderous hand of Herod the Great, built for political gain not for religious service of the True God. It was still being built when Jesus came to it, *Joh 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Joh 2:20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?*

But He saw through the deceit and cunning of those men, He saw it as ravaged by the long war against God, a bomb damaged and utterly ruined Temple and City. To see God’s handiwork so marred caused Jesus to cry, *Luk 19:42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*

He cried because He was human in every respect, but not a sinful human being, *Heb 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched **with the feeling of our infirmities**; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* As a man, He felt deeply about the injustices that were committed in the Name of God, and He felt a sorrow that this symbol of peace, the Temple and Jerusalem had been put to, smearing God with the hypocrisy and greed of mortal man. The things which belonged to her peace had been hidden from her eyes, and He cried.

After so many attempts at worship, the meagre attempt by Nehemiah to rebuild it, *Hag 2:3 Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?* And this attempt by Herod was as nothing, for Jesus would in three days oversee its destruction and rebuilding.

Now the language that Jesus uses in John's Gospel has a double meaning, *Joh 2:18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Joh 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Joh 2:20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? Joh 2:21 But he spake of the temple of his body.*

Jesus says to those Jews, "you destroy this temple, as it were, pointing to Himself, and I will rebuild it". The Jews took a literal interpretation, and said that it had taken 46 years to build and yet you think that you can raise it up in three days? The Jews don't understand that He was speaking of His body not the earthly temple, "*But he spake of the temple of his body*". It is necessary that the earthly Temple be demolished that the True temple of Jesus body stand in Glory. This Temple was built, raised up by Jesus, not by man, not in some future time, but in a little over a week from when it was said.

What purpose does an earthly Temple serve when the true is revealed, *Heb 8:1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; Heb 8:2 **A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.*** The earthly Temple is redundant, it is like the redundant church buildings, no longer used for worship, no longer having a congregation meeting there. Like so many of those redundant buildings, the Temple was knocked down, and demolished by the Romans, as Jesus laments.

So why are men so fixated upon the earthly Temple, almost willing it to stand when God says otherwise? Why do they look to a building of stone to be raised up again and not a spiritual person as Christ? Why do they look to events, seeing in them the disobedient and ungodly generations of earthly Israel who hated and crucified Jesus but miraculously raised to heaven and not the blood bought sons and daughters of Christ, who long for Him. It is because they are carnal persons, seeing earthly things, through their narrow understanding of the Glory which alone belongs to Jesus the Messiah.

Why do they roll back the events of Heaven to concentrate on the earthly, like the man with the muck rake, the man who could look no way but downward, with the muck rake in his hand; who was offered a celestial crown for his muck rake, but who would neither look up nor regard the crown he was offered, but continued to rake to himself the filth of the floor, because they have their eyes closed to Christ's glory.

The woman at the well of Sychar was taught a lesson in true worship, when Jesus said, *Joh 4:21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when **ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.** Joh 4:22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. Joh 4:23 **But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth:** for the Father seeketh such to worship him. Joh 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.* She thought that the place where you worshipped was important, its not. Its neither here nor there, and people who say it is, who even say that the temple on earth will be rebuilt for worship, make Jesus a liar.

Put another way, if you cannot worship God in truth, in the way he wants, its no use going to a church, worshipping in a place, Mt. Gerazim or Jerusalem, in the vain hope that "the better the place, the better the worship". If YOU cannot worship in truth, the place you worship will make no difference to your worship. Going further, it will do you no good worshipping after man's way, worshipping at a denominational building or in a denomination if YOU cannot worship Him in truth. You may think it good to worship God in a Baptist church, a Free church, an Anglican church, a Methodist church, a catholic church and so on, but they are nothing that was set up by God, and they are nothing, and people think that they can go and worship God there, and the place is something and the nature of the worshipper is as nothing. Be advised, worship is in truth and the place is nothing.

To cement what Christ is saying, He tells of the coming destruction, *Luk 19:43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, Luk 19:44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; **and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another;** because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*

Dr Gill says,

The time of the ministry of John the Baptist, of Christ, and his apostles in Judea, was the time of Jerusalem's visitation in a way of mercy; which not being taken notice of, and observed, brought another kind

of visitation upon them, even in a way of wrath and vengeance. The Jews pretend to assign other causes of Jerusalem's destruction; but the true cause was their rejection of Jesus, as the Messiah.

At the start of His ministry He told the Jews, *Luk 4:17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, Luk 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, **to preach deliverance to the captives**, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, Luk 4:19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.* It was made clear to them what He was doing but they did not see it. Young's literal translation of the Bible says, "**because thou didst not know the time of thy inspection**".

The word used for "visitation" or "inspection" is ἐπισκοπή, the same word that is used for the office of a bishop or overseer, *1Ti 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 1Ti 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;*

What is to be inferred about their ignorance of God's visitation? There seems to have been the possibility that they might have heeded the warning, but they did not. What were they expecting that they missed entirely? They had welcomed Him as a King, surely they had knowledge of "the time of their visitation". Well, obviously not. They welcomed Him as King, but in their minds He was an earthly ruler, a liberator from the oppression of the Romans, and in this they had misread the script.

Passover was the time that Jerusalem was filled to the brim with Jews celebrating this compulsory feast of Israel. Estimates range between 100,000 and according to Josephus 2 million people. It was the ideal platform for Jesus to set His agenda before the Jewish people. To speak at this time was in effect, to address the whole nation. At first they accepted Him as King, but they still had a desire to keep their religion, its structure and order. The had come from Israel as a Theocracy, where God controlled the functions of the State of Israel, and where God was their King, to a State controlled by men and religion tolerated by the Romans who controlled them. The Jews wanted their religion but not at the expense of obeying God.

This is shown clearly by the fickle way the crowds behaved. Were the crowds genuine in their praise or was it hollow, the crowds that sang "*Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the*

*highest", would soon turn into a baying snarling mob, up for blood, Mar 15:11 **But the chief priests moved the people**, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. Mar 15:12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? Mar 15:13 And they cried out again, Crucify him. Mar 15:14 **Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done?** And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.*

The peoples' expectation had not been met and as soon as they realised it, they turned upon Him, and that I think was the reason that Jesus said, "*because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation*". The Roman governor, in the middle of this internecine squabble, could find no worthy cause of death in Jesus. The disciples were no better, *Mar 14:50 And they all forsook him, and fled.*

Christians have turned history upon its head. They have turned the event into a celebration of welcoming Jesus, as this website states, "Palm Sunday recalls an event in the Christian Scripture (The New Testament) of Jesus entering into Jerusalem and being greeted by the people waving palm branches. For Christians, it is a reminder of the welcoming of Jesus into our hearts and of our willingness to follow him." It is no such thing.

It should be called the Feast of the Betrayal, not Palm Sunday. The people were not sincere, and Jesus saw through the tinsel and sparkle, to the reality, *Luk 19:42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*

169. He Shall Appear Suddenly *Luke 19: 45 - 48*

Luk 19:45 And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; Luk 19:46 Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. Luk 19:47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, Luk 19:48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

The first thing that Jesus does on entering the City, is go to the Temple, and throw out the money changers, the buyers and sellers, the people who were only there for their own selfish gain, and to make religion ultra easy for the masses. It was a service industry. The Temple was just as much the people's temple as it was the religious leaders temple, and they all had a duty to keep worship in line

with the dictates of God, but they became lazy and they forgot or didn't know where what they practiced came from, and it became the worship invented by man.

I reckon that if you asked people why their brand of religion, why their brand of Christianity, is practiced the way it is, you wouldn't get a sensible answer. If you were to ask them why they chose to practice the way that they do and if they followed the Christianity of the early church, they wouldn't know. And they wouldn't be able to tell you where it came from either. Yet they would all say, "my religion is the best, and that is why I go to such and such a church", and defend going to that church not knowing much about it at all, but you see, they feel comfortable going there and that is why they do not question it.

Those Temple goers, the Templars of Jesus day had forgotten what worship was all about, just like their modern counterparts. Their loyalty was misplaced, religion was a business empire, the priests were puppets of Rome, the high priest didn't believe in the resurrection of the dead, the Pharisees mislead the people and fitted them out for hell and these were the sad people that the masses, the Jews, followed blindly, as Jesus said, "blind guides" and "the blind leading the blind". And it is just the same today.

A major contributory factor to this downgrade in Jesus' day was the loss of Bible knowledge. It had been going on for hundreds of years. It starts in a simple way, like with Eve at the beginning of mankind, *Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, **Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*** It starts with questioning the Word given by God, then an alternative explanation of God's Word is given, then there is no reason to trust God's Word because you have an alternative course of action, then the Word is put away because you do not need it and so man goes on in his own thoughts and becomes his own god.

You think that I am wrong? How many Christians use their Bibles every day, and take the Word of God and study it seriously, both in the OT and in the NT. I did not mean read it, a portion of scripture that somebody else has given to you to read and that is your duty done having read it. I mean really study it for yourself, so that you know it for yourself.

In the Coronation service, this was read to king Charles III,

SIR, to keep you ever mindful of the law and the Gospel of God as the Rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes, receive this

Book, **the most valuable thing that this world affords**. Here is Wisdom; this is the royal Law; these are the lively Oracles of God.

That lack of habitual study leads to God's Word being put away, "**the most valuable thing that this world affords**" is sidelined, and people think that they can manage their religious practice just as well without it. It happened to the kings of Israel!

In the days of King Josiah in 620 B.C. give or take a bit, about 300 years after King Solomon died when the Kingdom split into Judah and Israel, 100 years after Israel had gone into captivity, and about 50 years before the destruction of Solomon's Temple, a remarkable event occurred. The Law was found amongst the stuff that was obsolete, in a junk room of the Temple. Its like you and me, we have a junk room of things we will never use again, and as the years progress, we forgot what we put in the room and so we add junk to junk. The Law of the kings of Israel was just one of those lost items, they never thought that they would use it again, but it could not stay hidden.

*2Ki 22:8 And Hilkiyah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, **I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD**. And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. 2Ki 22:9 And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD. 2Ki 22:10 And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. 2Ki 22:11 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.*

Now Josiah was a good King, and from the age of 8 years he had followed the Lord, getting rid of false worship. He now came to the Temple which had fallen into decay and set about repairing it. We may gather that Temple worship had ceased or at least it was not fully followed, and the young King sought to remedy this. After the commencement of the work, they found the mysterious scrolls of the Law, but they don't understand the import of the words. They go to a prophetess for clarity, to Huldah, and she answers them,

*2Ch 34:23 And she (**Huldah**) answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me, 2Ch 34:24 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, **I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah: 2Ch 34:25 Because they have forsaken me, and have***

*burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; **therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched.*** 2Ch 34:26 And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to enquire of the LORD, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel concerning the words which thou hast heard; 2Ch 34:27 *Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the LORD.* 2Ch 34:28 *Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.*

We thought that it would end in a happy reunion between the King and the Law, but it was alas, too late for reforms, too late to save Judah from captivity, but our dear King Josiah would not live to see the evil that would come upon the nation. In this respect, he is like King Jesus who will die before the evil comes upon the nation. Like Josiah, Jesus is a reformer, but it is too late for the nation of the Jews, and we saw what would happen, *Luk 19:44 **And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another;*** because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. It is the same sentence, on the same city and Temple, Jerusalem, but with 600 years intervening.

Josiah did however hold a great celebration of the Passover after he found the Law, 2Ch 35:18 ***And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet;*** neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 2Ch 35:19 *In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept.* I suppose that you could say that Jesus' Passover was even greater, and that it was the last Passover in Israel.

Jesus cast out the "service industries" from the temple, and there must have been a lot of them in order to meet the demand of 100,000 people at Passover. The noise of the traders selling sheep, the money changers shouting out the best rates, the support industries selling food and drink, the noise must have been unbearable. You could hardly hear yourself think let alone concentrate on prayer and that was the business of the Temple, prayer. Jesus quotes Isaiah in support of His actions, *Isa 56:7 **Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer:*** their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; ***for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.***

On the day of the dedication of the Temple, Solomon had said, *1Ki 8:28 Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee today: 1Ki 8:29 That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. 1Ki 8:30 And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, **when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.***

That was what the Temple was, a prayer house, not a hiding place for thieves. They had immersed themselves in their rituals and sacrifices which because of their moral state, was an abomination, *Isa 1:11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. Isa 1:12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Isa 1:13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Isa 1:14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. Isa 1:15 **And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.***

Jesus must have disrupted the usual commerce of the Passover, in fact His actions upon the Passover must have made it difficult or impossible for some people to celebrate it, as it would have made the whole preparation difficult as they had expected to buy what was needed at the Temple. I imagine that this act alone must have alienated Him from the people.

What is wrong with such people that they are gripped with fury and hatred? The religious leaders wanted Jesus dead, destroyed, because of His continual opposition to their way of religion, *Luk 19:47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him.* Stephen showed that it was because they had rejected the law, they had rejected truth, *Act 7:51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Act 7:52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Act 7:53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.*

But not only did these men reject the truth, they rewrote “truth” and it became their “truth”, as against Jesus truth. Where have I heard that before! As if there can be another truth. These people are taken by Satan who thrives on falsehood, *2Th 2:9 The Wicked One will come with the power of Satan and perform all kinds of false miracles and wonders, 2Th 2:10 and use every kind of wicked deceit on those who will perish. They will perish because they did not welcome and love the truth so as to be saved. 2Th 2:11 And so God sends the power of error to work in them so that they believe what is false. 2Th 2:12 The result is that all who have not believed the truth, but have taken pleasure in sin, will be condemned.* GNB.

George Orwell fought in the Spanish Civil war and had become aware of truth being rewritten, in his book “Homage to Catalonia” he said,

“Early in life I have noticed that no event is ever correctly reported in a newspaper, but in Spain, for the first time, I saw newspaper reports which did not bear any relation to the facts, not even the relationship which is implied in an ordinary lie. I saw great battles reported where there had been no fighting, and complete silence where hundreds of men had been killed. I saw troops who had fought bravely denounced as cowards and traitors, and others who had never seen a shot fired hailed as heroes of imaginary victories; and I saw newspapers in London retailing these lies and eager intellectuals building emotional superstructures over events that never happened. I saw, in fact, history being written not in terms of what happened but of what ought to have happened according to various “party lines.”

He further stated in his book “From Looking Back on the Spanish War, (1943)”,

I know it is the fashion to say that most of recorded history is lies anyway. I am willing to believe that history is for the most part inaccurate and biased, but what is peculiar to our own age is the abandonment of the idea that history could be truthfully written. In the past, people deliberately lied, or they unconsciously coloured what they wrote, or they struggled after the truth, well knowing that they must make many mistakes; but in each case they believed that “the facts” existed and were more or less discoverable. And in practice there was always a considerable body of fact which would have been agreed to by almost anyone.

If you look up the history of the last war in, for instance, the Encyclopedia Britannica, you will find that a respectable amount of the material is drawn from German sources. A British and a German historian would disagree deeply on many things, even on fundamentals, but there would still be a body of, as it were, neutral fact on which neither would seriously challenge the other. It is just this common basis of agreement with its implication that human beings are all one species of animal that totalitarianism destroys.

Nazi theory indeed specifically denies that such a thing as "the truth" exists. There is, for instance, no such thing as "Science". There is only "German Science," "Jewish Science," etc. The implied objective of this line of thought is a nightmare world in which the Leader, or some ruling clique, controls not only the future but the past. If the Leader says of such and such an event, "It never happened" -- well, it never happened. If he says that two and two are five -- well two and two are five. This prospect frightens me much more than bombs -- and after our experiences of the last few years that is not such a frivolous statement.

We live in a world where "truth" is put out by men to be believed, that is unless you want to be declared as a heretic, but it is "truth" not according to what can be proved and not what God says, but what they want truth to be, for their own selfish ends. Politicians, scientists, religious leaders, all put out a form of truth, as Orwell said, "history being written not in terms of what happened but of what ought to have happened according to various "party lines.""

Jesus became a victim of man's "truth", and they destroyed Him but not the Truth He spoke. The people listened to Him as He taught, and no doubt He was inspiring in His words, but inspiration does not save you and judging by the number of Jews who were killed at the fall of Jerusalem, 1.1 million souls according to Josephus, they never heeded His words.

170. The First Challenge *Luke 20: 1 - 8*

Luk 20:1 And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders, Luk 20:2 And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? Luk 20:3 And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me: Luk 20:4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? Luk

20:5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? Luk 20:6 But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. Luk 20:7 And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was. Luk 20:8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

This is about the authority of Christ. Where does it come from and more importantly, whose authority is He under? The Centurion comes to Jesus and says, *Luk 7:8 For I also am a man set **under authority**, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.* Put in a more modern version, *Luk 7:8 **I have officers who give orders to me, and I have soldiers who take orders from me.** I can say to one of them, 'Go!' and he goes. I can say to another, 'Come!' and he comes. I can say to my servant, 'Do this!' and he will do it."* CEV.

The Centurion is under authority, and although he is of a high rank, there are officers over him, the Prefects, the Tribunes and the Legates. Discipline in the Roman army was for centuries a model for European rulers. In order to maintain well-trained and obedient soldiers, an extremely strict military law had to be introduced, to which both ordinary and high rankings were to be subject to. This procedure was primarily to make the legionaries completely devoted to the commander. The soldier was to be more afraid of what could happen to him in the Roman camp for not completing the task than of dying on the battlefield. At the same time, a reward system was introduced to motivate soldiers to even better combat and sacrifice.

It was a volunteer army, so signing on meant signing up for the discipline of the Legion. You had to have discipline and dissent could be punishable by death. It mattered not whether you like the superior or not, you must obey him, you must obey the authority. It was essential for order in battle and you learned it in every sphere of your life, "*I have soldiers who take orders from me. I can say to one of them, 'Go!' and he goes. I can say to another, 'Come!' and he comes. I can say to my servant, 'Do this!' and he will do it.*"

The Centurion knew that discipline and authority were bed mates, and there could be no discipline without authority, and the Centurion saw this authority in Jesus. He called to Jesus authority because it was similar to his. He saw it as part of a well regulated order, and seeing Jesus was under authority (the Father), He could command illnesses to depart. Authority was the power to give orders or make decisions, the power or right to direct or control someone or something. If the Centurion did not obey, then the authority above him would fail, and that

above that man would fail, and so on, and the whole Legion would collapse in anarchy. It was a house of cards which fell if you took the lower cards away.

The rulers wanted to know the authority Jesus possessed which gave Him the right to do something and they were seeing whether His authority came from God. God's authority is shown in the government of men, *Rom 13:1 Let every soul to the higher authorities be subject, **for there is no authority except from God**, and the authorities existing are appointed by God, Rom 13:2 so that he who is setting himself against the authority, against God's ordinance hath resisted; and those resisting, to themselves shall receive judgment. Rom 13:3 For those ruling **are not a terror to the good works, but to the evil**; and dost thou wish not to be afraid of the authority? that which is good be doing, and thou shalt have praise from it, Rom 13:4 **for of God it is a ministrant to thee for good**; and if that which is evil thou mayest do, be fearing, for not in vain doth it bear the sword; for of God it is a ministrant, an avenger for wrath to him who is doing that which is evil. YLT*

Do you see what that is saying? There is no authority, no power to give orders or make decisions apart from God. The power or right to direct or control someone or something, is primarily with God. Now that does not say all rulers have a right to do what they want, to kill dissent, to rule with evil intent and with good intent and expect your dumb obedience. No, it says that they, "**are not a terror to the good works, but to the evil**" and God intends for them to uphold good. The authority only works for the good of good people, as it says, *Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

The authority that the Roman was under, was a series of rules binding the Legions together in a structured manner. It was not unlike God's authority, working among men to keep order, *Rom 13:1 Let every soul to the higher authorities be subject, **for there is no authority except from God**, and the authorities existing are appointed by God.* The same is true of the authority in the family, it is a hierarchy, a rank of persons, and its order goes back to Creation.

If you take the Centurion's position, it is exactly the same as the woman's position in 1Cor 11: 2 - 16. He is under authority and she is under authority, *1Co 11:10 Therefore ought the woman to have authority on her head, on account of*



the angels. Darby. Both the Centurion and the Christian woman are under authority. She has “authority on her head” and he has authority on his head, because he is under authority. She shows her authority by wearing a hair covering, and he shows he is under authority by wearing the insignia of a Roman Centurion, the helmet and plume, which made him recognisable in battle.

Some women see hair covering as a symbol of her servitude, but to the contrary it is a badge of her authority and position. The Centurion never thought of his helmet and insignia as an imposition, as a sign of his inferior position, but a mark of the respect of rank. He was to set it forth to show his position and rank to the troops. The woman too has a mark of the honour of God to show the angels her rank.

The woman carries the insignia of her rank before the legions of angels. God has shown a difference between men and woman to those creatures, the angels, and the woman, whose privilege was to bear the Messiah and to bear mankind, is given a covering for her head. If the woman does not want this upon her head, the angels will be taught a lesson that she is not willing to serve in her appointed position. The man who accepts this is likewise not accepting his position, and you can see by this irresponsible action, how Christ is not honoured in the Church.

Now what authority is Jesus under, “*Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?*”. He does not tell them who gave Him the authority to do what He did, although that would have given the Pharisees ammunition with which to kill Him. Instead He asks them a question about somebody else, John the Baptist, *Luk 20:4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?* Did John receive authority from God in Heaven, or man on earth.

Well, they had a choice to make, and it was only a choice of two things, *Luk 20:5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From **heaven**; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? Luk 20:6 But and if we say, Of **men**; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.* They were caught in their own trap, so they answered, *Luk 20:7 And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was.*

Luk 20:8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

There are wider implications to this question of authority, and we would do well to take time over them. The “Christian” ministry is something that if you ask a person, when did they get the authority to be a teacher, to become a prophet or

an evangelist it would be a difficult question to answer. The Centurion knows when he is promoted to the officer class, the woman knows when she is in submission to Christ, the man knows when he has passed from death to life, but when are you given the authority of God to become a minister?

To answer this question, the candidate for the “ministry” turns to the get out clause of ,“calling”, and he will tell you he is “called” to the ministry, but if you press him to tell you how he knows he will say, “God called him”. Unfortunately, in the majority of cases, the person who is “called” to the ministry, is the only one who hears God’s voice and it may be the only time that he does. This calling may receive a response from others, giving him preaching engagements, a place in a denominational bible college or a position in a ready made church, which he knows nothing about. All of which are non-biblical responses to the problem.

As a result of this, a man may be pushed through a denominational sausage machine, until he is squeezed out with the appropriate man made qualifications, put into a church that now votes on whether to accept him, although he thinks he is called of God, and this fits him for the ministry and incidentally confirms his calling. What apparently started with God has ended with man’s calling. For example, I cannot believe that any man is called into the church of England, it is impossible that God would call a man into a godless system, because it has so many practices which do not follow the way of Christ, and that the person is being deceived by the devil that he is called to this body of people. There is no scriptural warrant for a church of England and you will see it did not exist for hundreds of years, so it is a confusion brought about in time.

In a letter of resignation, J C Philpot summed up the CoE as follows,
Mr. Provost:

I beg leave to resign the Fellowship of Worcester College, to which I was elected in the year 1826. This step I am compelled to take because **I can no longer with a good conscience continue a Minister or a Member of the Established Church.**

After great and numerous trials of mind, I am, as I trust, led by the hand of God thus to separate myself from **that corrupt and worldly system, called the Church of England.** Her errors and corruptions, as well as her utter contrariety to a Gospel Church as revealed in the New Testament, have been for two or three years gradually opening upon my mind. But though I have thus slowly and by degrees obtained light from above to see the Established Church somewhat in her true colours, it is, I confess, only but very lately that **the sin of remaining in her** has been forcibly laid upon my conscience. I have felt of late

that, by continuing one of her ministers, I was upholding what in the sight of the holy Jehovah is hateful and loathsome.

I have felt that, by standing up in her pulpit, I was sanctioning a system in principle and practice, in root and branches, corrupt before God. I have felt that I was keeping those children of God who sat under my ministry in total darkness as to **the nature of a true Gospel Church**. I have felt that both I myself, and the spiritual people that attended my ministry, were, in principle and system, mixed up with--the ungodly, the Pharisee, the formalist, the worldling, and the hypocrite. And thus, while I remained in the Church of England, my principles and my practice, my profession and my conduct, my preaching and my acting, were inconsistent with each other. I was building up with the right hand what I was pulling down with the left.....

..... Lastly, I secede from the Church of England because I can find in her scarcely one mark of a true church. She tramples upon one ordinance of Christ by **sprinkling infants**, and calling it regeneration (the Word of God allowing no other than the baptism of believers, and that by immersion); and profanes the Lord's Table by permitting the ungodly to participate. The true Church is despised; but she is honored. The true Church is persecuted; but she is a persecutor. The true Church is chosen out of the world; but she is part and parcel of it. The true Church consists only of the regenerate; but she embraces in her universal arms all the drunkards, liars, thieves, and immoral characters of the land. She christens them, she confirms them, she marries them, she buries them. And she pronounces of all for whom she executes these offices, that they are regenerate, that 'all their sins are forgiven them', that they are 'the servants of God'.

If perhaps on a dying bed any doubts and convictions should arise that all is not right for eternity, she sends her minister to visit them, and 'to absolve them from all their sins'. And having thus lulled their fears, and **deluded them to die in peace**, she quiets the rising doubts of their friends at the mouth of the grave, by assuring those who 'this our brother is delivered out of the miseries of this sinful world', and is 'committed to the dust in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life'

.....With all due respect to you as Provost of Worcester College,
Yours faithfully,
J. C. Philpot

Philpot's false position came from a long series of errors which sucked him in to the Anglican system. Belatedly but fortunately, he saw his error, and like many men, there has been no attempt at seeing God's requirements being fulfilled, only man's and this makes me query the whole process of the calling. When you look into "what is a calling", you get general suggestions but nothing concrete and the desire is interpreted to produce the result you want.

The man who thinks he might have a call will submit himself to the authority of Christ, which means he will morally and spiritually work on those areas of his life which will fit him for service, and here are three passages for you to consider, *1Ti 3:1 The word is faithful: if any one aspires to exercise oversight, he desires a good work. 1Ti 3:2 The overseer then must be **irreproachable**, husband of **one wife, sober, discreet, decorous, hospitable, apt to teach**; 1Ti 3:3 **not given to excesses from wine, not a striker, but mild, not addicted to contention, not fond of money**, 1Ti 3:4 **conducting his own house well, having his children in subjection with all gravity**; 1Ti 3:5 **(but if one does not know how to conduct his own house, how shall he take care of the assembly of God?)** 1Ti 3:6 **not a novice**, that he may not, being inflated, fall into the fault of the devil. 1Ti 3:7 But it is necessary that **he should have also a good testimony from those without**, that he may fall not into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

*1Pe 5:1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am their fellow-elder and witness of the sufferings of the Christ, who also am partaker of the glory about to be revealed: 1Pe 5:2 shepherd the flock of God which is among you, **exercising oversight, not by necessity, but willingly; not for base gain**, but readily; 1Pe 5:3 not as lording it over your possessions, but being models for the flock. 1Pe 5:4 And when the chief shepherd is manifested ye shall receive the unfading crown of glory.*

*Tit 1:5 For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou mightest go on to set right what remained unordered, and establish elders in each city, as ***I*** had ordered thee: Tit 1:6 **if any one be free from all charge against him**, husband of one wife, having **believing children not accused of excess or unruly**. Tit 1:7 For the overseer must be free from all charge against him as God's steward; not headstrong, not passionate, not disorderly through wine, not a striker, not seeking gain by base means; Tit 1:8 but **hospitable, a lover of goodness, discreet, just, pious, temperate**, Tit 1:9 **clinging to the faithful word according to the doctrine taught, that he may be able both to encourage with sound teaching and refute gainsayers**. Darby.*

There is nothing there about Bible college, where you are made to conform to the dogma of a denomination, other men calling you, entering into a paid for ministry, but there is being able to give hospitality and not being chargeable to the people, as Paul was.

171. Authority and Calling *Luke 20: 3 - 8*

Luk 20:3 And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me: Luk 20:4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? Luk 20:5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? Luk 20:6 But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. Luk 20:7 And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was. Luk 20:8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

We continue to explore whether a person going into some form of ministry has to be “called” and what is the process for becoming a minister. By “minister” I mean a person who is a Prophet, an Evangelist, a Pastor/Teacher or an Apostle and anybody who has a gift which they wish to share with any one else, any one who is building, edifying the body of Christ, the assembly, and fitting them for a like service to God, *Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:* The word ministry = διακονία means service, and so we are looking at serving the people of God, and it is used of Martha serving in her house.

I think all areas of “service” or ministry, are important but different, *1Co 12:4 But there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit; 1Co 12:5 and there are **distinctions of services**, and the same Lord; 1Co 12:6 and there are distinctions of operations, **but the same God who operates all things in all.*** God operates or works in each of the areas of service. It is like an amplifier. The body of believers builds itself up, works through the power of God to increase his praise. We must not forget that, that we do not minister, serve others, so that WE become the focus of the effort, it is that we can serve God better.

How do you get in a position of service? There are moral hurdles that you must overcome first before launching out into service, and we looked at the passages in **1Tim 3: 1 - 7, 1Pet 5: 1 - 4, Tit 1: 5 - 9**. These are the character traits found in people who would undertake a service or ministry for God’s people. You will notice that people are not “called” to do these things but they are

commanded to do these things. In fact they are how every believer should behave, and they are not higher qualifications for service.

There is a will to serve and if anyone desires, stretches forth, to oversight, they desire a good work, *1Ti 3:1 The word is faithful: if any one aspires to exercise oversight, **he desires** a good work.* You can sit around all day but there is seldom a call and you will be waiting a long time. The authority to minister will depend upon whether the individual has the “desire” to minister and whether he fulfils the requirements of God, which include the moral conditions, *Tit 2:12 **Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;** Tit 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Tit 2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Tit 2:15 **These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.***

The man of God speaks with authority because he has aligned himself with God and that “**denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world**”. He is against ungodliness and for right living. The man who claims authority and lives a life denying God, because he will not conform his life to what God has said, the Scripture, is a LIAR, *1Jn 2:4 **He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.** 1Jn 2:5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. 1Jn 2:6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

The chief priests and the scribes, thought that they had the authority of God, and the right to minister and serve, and they questioned Jesus authority compared to theirs, but He did not answer directly, and posed the question, *Luk 20:4 **The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?*** And that answers the question of authority and the right to minister, or serve, and shows that Jesus accepted only that which came from heaven.

So why do the men of today who think that an intellectual course fits them more readily for service than a course in Christian living? No amount of book learning can outweigh time spent with Jesus, *Act 4:13 **Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned (ἀγράμματος) and ignorant (ἰδιώτης) men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, **that they had been with Jesus.*****

You see what we are doing, we are breaking the paradigm of denominations, and as a result we are moving back towards a much simpler Christianity, which consists not of massive numbers of members or denominations and a man made system of church government, but the local assembly, and responsibility to no one but Christ and answerable only to Christ. One thing the seven churches of Revelation teaches us is that each church is responsible to Christ and each will answer only to Him. There is no mediating denomination, no invented hierarchy between Christ and the churches.

For example, there is no church of England interposed between Christ and a local church, it is Christ and the church in communion and not a third party taking over a controlling position standing between them, *Rev 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; Rev 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in **my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks.** The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.*

These little assemblies of God's people do not need a denominational umbrella, making decisions for them, they must make their own decisions, and they must think hard about the person who they have as an overseer and minister, and the way that they see this is by examining the moral character of the individual, not by having someone imposed upon them, whose claim to fame is that they went to Bible college.

In truth, the Bible is a simple book, so why would you want someone to come along and complicate it? Jesus encourages a childlike trust, *Mat 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Mat 18:4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Mat 18:5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.*

We don't need academics to tell us about Jesus, we don't need intellectuals or scholars or theologians to confuse us, we need the simple teaching of Jesus. One of the reasons why men turn to academia, is because the Bible seems hard to understand, and if it does you should seriously ask yourself if you are a believer, because it is only hid from those who do not accept the truth, as Paul says, *2Th 2:10 Lost people will be fooled by his evil deeds. They could be saved, but they will refuse to love the truth and accept it. 2Th 2:11 **So God will make sure that they are fooled into believing a lie.*** CEV.

Another reason is because they are too lazy to study for themselves, or their faith is so weak that they cannot stand up to the intellectual bullies who berate them, or there is pride in learning and a form of Gnosticism arises, *Col 2:18* ***Don't be cheated by people who make a show of acting humble and who worship angels. They brag about seeing visions. But it is all nonsense, because their minds are filled with selfish desires.*** *Col 2:19* *They are no longer part of Christ, who is the head of the whole body. Christ gives the body its strength, and he uses its joints and muscles to hold it together, as it grows by the power of God.* CEV.

This scholasticism is true of all humanistic institutions, like for instance science. Because it is just the same as religion, and it has its high priests and intellectuals who confuse, and manipulate people's minds, for example they are so convinced of evolution, yet none of them can show you how the basic self replicating life form came from the basic chemical elements. They are the mathemagicians of our age and little different from the magicians of Egypt or the magicians of Babylon, and their claim to fame is that they confuse the simple man.

Men are constantly trying to control your religion and one of the ways we see this is how much do you get encouraged to participate in worship? Well you say, I sing hymns, yes, hymns chosen for you, well, I participate in the communion, which is done for you, well, I say a creed, yes which was written for you, and can you pray freely or give a teaching, or give a prophecy, or is this all governed for you? All of your worship is choreographed for you, including your giving, which giving incidentally did not occur in the meeting originally. You have to be told what to do and your part in the service of worship is minimal, and mind numbingly basic, so that after a few sessions you can go through the process with your eyes closed, and wander off in your mind to other things. When was the last time you went along to worship with something you shared with other believers? Worship is not spontaneous.

Be honest with me, did you ever think about whether those old denominations were what Christ had intended when you first became a Christian, or whether those men taught the truth about where you should worship? Or did you blindly go and follow the system, because it had always been there, and unquestioningly you went off following the first thing you saw, like ducks imprinting upon themselves the first thing they saw, and forever after that was their parent. Did you ever question anything at the beginning of your journey, I did not, I just presumed that they were right and I followed them hoping that they were following Jesus. Big mistake.

Well we have shipwrecked those boats, the SS Religion, and the SS Denomination, on the rocks of ignorance and paradigms. We move on in our search for Truth, and ask “why is the ministry restricted to the men?” Why is “service” a male oriented discipline? Well it isn’t and I will just take time to show why. Women have a diaconate, a ministry as well, *Rom 16:1 Now I introduce to you our sister Phoebe, who is **a deaconess in the church at Cenchreae**, Rom 16:2 that you may give her a Christian welcome in a manner becoming God's people, and give her whatever help she needs from you, for she herself has given protection to many, including myself. Rom 16:3 Remember me to **Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workers** in the work of Christ Jesus, Rom 16:4 who once risked their very necks for my life. I am so thankful to them; not only I but also all the churches among the heathen thank them. Rom 16:5 Remember me to the church too, that meets at their house. Remember me to my dear Epaphroditus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. Rom 16:6 **Remember me to Mary, who has toiled so hard for you.***

I don’t think that they, women, have a lower moral criteria than men but the same, and that Paul does not mention them in 1Timothy 3, because it is obvious that “what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander”. Men and women teach, there is no doubt about it, *Act 18:25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. Act 18:26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when **Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*** They functioned as a ministerial team, serving the body of believers

But I stress this which we saw in the previous study, the man is over the woman, and she must defer to him because that is the divine order, but if she is willing to do that before the Lord so that order is maintained she can teach. The verses in Timothy 2 speak of this authority, *1Ti 2:12 And I do not allow a woman to teach nor **to exercise authority over a man**, but to be in silence. 1Ti 2:13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 1Ti 2:14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived has come to be in transgression; LITV.*

If each of them observes the role God gives them, and they are under authority, they have authority to teach as Priscilla and Aquila did, and the older women have a duty to teach the younger women, *Tit 2:3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, **teachers of good things**; Tit 2:4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, Tit 2:5 To be discreet,*

chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

The overseers and ministers of the assembly must have the same moral qualifications otherwise it is not an equal yoke. Let me turn the verses about face to make a point, "Likewise, deaconesses *are to be* reverent, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy of ill gain, having the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. And also let these be tested first, then let them serve, being without reproach. Likewise, *their* husband *are to be* reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deaconesses be wives of one husband, ruling *their* own houses and children well. For those having served well gain a good grade for themselves and much boldness in faith, those in Christ Jesus".

There is a famous quote in James Boswell's "Life", "I told him I had been that morning at a meeting of the people called Quakers, where I had heard a woman preach. *Johnson*: "Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all." That is an opinion, but I have heard women preach much better than men.

Let us look at the qualifications for oversight and service. They must be of good character, blameless, and with one spouse. You don't pick up a partner to complete the task having been accepted for service, you have the partner first, and it comes a long way before teaching is mentioned. Why is marriage so important? Surely you can do all that is required without being married? Well you cannot, and Scripture says so. Ministers must be married and have a family before they start on the ministry, and I would suggest, the help mate wife, works with her husband in the Ministry, like Priscilla and Aquila. There are exceptions, but I think these are rare, for example when a man is made a eunuch for the kingdom of God.

Well you say, I thought Paul said it was better to be single in 1 Corinthians chapter 7, but I note that 1st Corinthians was written in about 56AD and 1st Timothy about 10 years later, so either he had a change of mind on marriage, or more than likely he was writing to the conditions in Corinth, *1Co 7:25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. 1Co 7:26 I suppose therefore that **this is good for the present distress**, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.*

But there is another compelling reason and that is the relationship of marriage mirrors the relationship between Christ and the church, or assembly, *Eph 5:23*

*for a husband is head of the wife, as also the Christ is head of the assembly. *He* is Saviour of the body. Darby. If the couple with pretensions to the ministry do not show the relationship between Christ and the assembly, how can they expect to lead the church because they set a poor example? The first thing a couple must do is show the outward relationship before they start spouting about the theoretical and spiritual purpose of marriage.*

172. Serving Believers *Luke 20: 3 - 8*

Luk 20:3 And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me: Luk 20:4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? Luk 20:5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? Luk 20:6 But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. Luk 20:7 And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was. Luk 20:8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

We have not left our subject of authority yet and there are some more points we have to cover. We have to look in detail at what fits people for service to Christ, and just what shows that they are the people Christ wants to be examples of Him, and how we see their authority to serve. This was the priests question to Jesus, ***“by what authority doest thou these things?”***

We saw how we follow what man has set up as his view of Christianity, a paradigm, his concept of Christianity, and we follow blindly and unquestioningly, where he leads us. We start by following Christ but then somehow we lapsed, and before long we were following what men tell us is of Christ. The priests in England used Latin in their services and it was illegal to use English, because if the people understood what the truth was, they would dissent and the established church would crumble and fall.

The church is built not by man’s hand but by God’s hand and we saw that God’s hand is upon moral people. The passages in **1Tim 3: 1 - 7, 1Pet 5: 1 - 4, Tit 1: 5 - 9**, which speak of the qualifications and hence authority of the individual, may be summed up as follows:

1. The **person** must be, irreproachable, discreet, decorous, **apt to teach**, not a striker, mild, not addicted to contention, not fond of money, not headstrong, not passionate, not disorderly through wine, not a striker, not seeking gain by base means; but hospitable, a lover of goodness, discreet,

just, pious, temperate, exercising oversight, not by necessity, but willingly; not for base gain

2. In his sphere of influence, his **house**, he must be, free from all charge against him that he should have also a good testimony from those without, conducting his own house well, having his children in subjection with all gravity; having believing children not accused of excess or unruly. if one does not know how to conduct his own house, how shall he take care of the assembly of God?
3. In his **assembly** he must not lord it over your possessions, but being models for the flock clinging to the faithful word according to the doctrine taught, that he may be able both to encourage with sound teaching and refute gainsayers

The three areas he must prove himself in are in his **person**, his **home** and his **assembly**. All three areas involve teaching in some form, and therefore involve learning or discipleship, and that comes first, **before** one launches out into a public ministry of service, *Mat 28:19 **Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations**, baptising them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; Mat 28:20 **teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have enjoined you**. And behold, **I* am with you all the days, until the completion of the age.* Darby.*

We take those words of Christ and we decide that we are evangelists, and go out with scarcely any knowledge of Christ. We become blind leaders of the blind, and nobody in the churches gives you any correction at all, and so we get bolder in our ignorance, to proclaim a pseudo gospel. No wonder Paul says that it is dangerous for a young believer to minister, *1Ti 3:6 **Not a neophyte: lest, being puffed up with pride, he fall into the judgment of the devil***. Not a “new shoot”, not one who is new to the faith, should be given this most important duty.

The first set of qualities relating to the **person** are remarkably like the fruit of the Spirit, *Gal 5:22 **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith**, Gal 5:23 **Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law***. Well you would expect them to be, after all, they are qualities of a spiritual life, and that must be present in you before one goes out to teach other men. And they are also related to the Ten Commandments, summarised in love for God and your neighbour. If a man fails in these he will fail to serve the people, because he will be a hypocrite, teaching one thing and doing another.

The second set of qualities relating to the **home** deal with how he orders his family and the testimony they show to the community. He must get to work on his own house before he starts to work on the world, just as God does, *1Pe 4:17 For the time of having the judgment **begin from the house of God is come** ; but if first from us, what shall be the end of those who obey not the glad tidings of God?* It begins with me and ripples out to the world, just as the Gospel does.

I notice the people who minister must have children, and must have children who are under control. It doesn't matter how keen you are to get involved in the ministry, how gifted an orator you may be, how much Bible knowledge you possess, how popular you may be, if you have not shown yourself to be a good teacher in your own home, you are not fit for wider ministry and you should not be in a ministry until you get these issues sorted.

Someone said, "Preachers' kids are often under a lot of pressure to be perfect, or at least to act like it, so they won't disgrace the family and the church. So they try to live up to everyone's expectations, and this can lead them to practice the very hypocrisy they see in others. Especially in smaller churches, the pastor's family is put on a pedestal with everyone watching their every move." Well, the trick is to work more on those close to you and stop trying to save the world. What Paul says of himself is equally true of the family and children, *1Co 9:27 I keep my body under control and make it my slave, so I won't lose out after telling the good news to others.* CEV. We see that we can easily lose those near to us, after "*telling the good news to others*".

The third set of qualities relating to the **assembly**, or **church**, are a mindset which he must develop before taking up the ministry, so that when situations develop in the ministry, he is prepared. Paul had work to support himself, and it was a matter of honour that he was not chargeable to the churches. Paul didn't enter new cities with a plan to rely on the people he would be speaking to, for material support. He entered new cities with a plan to work with his own hands. And those hands, which probably became calloused over time, enabled him to stand in line and buy food with his own hard-earned money.

It wasn't just Paul, *Act 18:2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. Act 18:3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. Act 18:4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.*

Those who think to get rich on the Gospel, the prosperity preachers, ought to take a leaf out of Paul's book and be self-supporting. And it should be noticed that mega-churches don't leave much room for many persons to minister. Mega-churches might smother growth by not developing believers.

There is the continual begging bowl put out to get people to give to missionaries and all manner of works, to support churches, to give bibles, to help in business. I don't see any of this in the NT. It is almost a point of honour not to speak about giving. But men continue to ask you to give so that you fulfil **their dreams**, their ambitions, which are too big for their pockets, so they need your pockets as well. I don't see God directing it.

This very week, a well known Christian organisation wanted £1m to propagate a magazine, which is put out by their organisation. They said, "I pray that this latest edition of **** * * * **** * * * * will help you encounter God afresh through Scripture". If you are propagating Scripture, you let the word of God speak for itself, and you don't need £1m to put your comments out beside it. If you have an idea, and that idea is supported by the Lord, and you don't have the wherewithal to pay for it, then you earn the money, or ask God, but you don't beg. George Muller is a good example in this respect.

Now who has the **authority** to do the work of God, the man who follows men's ways or the man who follows God's ways? The man who follows man's ways, writes his own script as he goes along and it changes with time. He writes what he thinks Jesus should have taught instead of what He taught. The professions of faith, the pretensions to faith that he makes, vary with time, so that the only common denominator in the denominations, is the name of the church, because what they believe has changed with time. Whereas once, they may have believed literally in the Bible, they no longer believe in it literally, they reject the resurrection and say it is only meant figuratively, they no longer believe in the virgin birth, they believe in same sex marriages, whereas once they did not. They have invented structures and ranks that the Bible knows nothing of, dressing up in costumes of office that God did not give them, government that He never commanded them. And yet, this is man's way of doing religion, and he still expects to have God's authority stamped upon this hideous monster, claiming to be Christ's child?

I think you can see in the priest's question, "*by what authority doest thou these things?*" that they were not only questioning Christ's authority, but were attempting to put their authority above Christ's authority, and were challenging were He got it, "***who is he that gave thee this authority?***" Well, John got his authority from Heaven, and that they had to acknowledge, and so should all men

who serve the Lord and not themselves, and they do that by doing things God's way and not man's way, including how you get in to service for the Lord.

I have thought a lot about how we get into service for the Lord lately. How we dream up a scheme for becoming a missionary to darkest Africa, or anywhere else, and it is not surprising that a person's ignorance and ambitious desire, drive him on, to do something quite unforgivable, to build upon another man's foundation, to build where a man is or has already built. Let me tell you a personal story that is relevant to this subject and illustrates the point I am making.

On my first trip to Ghana, West Africa, as a senior Advisor to the IFRC, I was tasked, as part of a Global Programme, that the great and the good dreamed up, with implementing road safety programmes in that country. My qualification was that I came from a road safety Laboratory, TRL, and I had much experience of western good practice. I was the man charged with going in and sorting out their problem, seeing as I supposed that they hadn't got a clue about safety or they would not have the numbers of casualties they did. Well its not quite like England in Africa, and for a start the culture is different, they do not have much money, and the economic situation is not like ours, and people tend to gravitate to the highways because that is where the trade is. They have an aging fleet of "just about there" private vehicles which are cheap but dangerous, and so the list goes on. Road accidents are part of the collateral damage incurred during development.

I arrived and set about my task visiting people and trying to make friends, but the man I wanted to see, the Director of the Ministry of Roads and Highways, the top man, and he would not see me. I managed to force a visit with the help of two friendly politicians. As I remember it, going into that meeting, it went like this. It was very stiff and formal, and the director asked me what I was in Ghana for. I began my spiel with the organisation which I came from and what I intended to do, when suddenly I was cut off, and he said to me, "I know why you are here, we are not boys that we need you telling us what to do". I was taken aback and the meeting did not last much longer. I went away and thought about what he had said. It hurt but that was alleviated by the fact that I was getting good money, and so I went and thought about the problem afresh.

I had not considered that this country might have well qualified people already working on safety, but they didn't come from a first world country with its considerable resources. And just like the UK, some 50 years earlier, they had a similar problem, which just needed time and resources to cure.

I had simply not considered that I was bursting in on someone else's labours, I had not considered anything about the people that I was dealing with, their feelings, but I came in with the authority and agenda from Geneva, and I upset some people. I was able a few years later to apologise to the man who made the remarks to me. And that became a lesson to me about Christian missions also, which are just the same, with the same "know it all" approach. Barging into a county or area where we do not know the culture but treading all over a work that may differ from what we would do, none the less, it is a work of Christ, which we overturn with our zeal, *Rom 15:20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, **not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation**: Rom 15:21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.*

If Christ is already known in the country and towns, why do we have to go there? We go only because we do not trust Christ, and we are saying that we know better than you people that are there, "how to do Christianity", and our way is better than your way. And with that we are off, sending people to put them right, sending Presbyterian missionaries, Anglican missionaries, Catholic missionaries, Baptist missionaries, JW's, Mormons, and what we are saying to these people is, your religion is rubbish, and ours is far better. Your religion is not right because we have set up ours in opposition and we will not work with you.

But if the church is already established, there is no need to go and evangelise the people because that is the job of local believers, and if that church will follow Christ, He will lead it, not some well meaning but unthinking westerners. The churches may lack resources and have needs, which we may be led to send to, but we do not send denominational missionaries, unless they ask for help.

Christ is well capable in building HIS church, however you might like to think it is ready to topple, like the Ark of God, a type of Christ, when it was being transported, *1Ch 13:9 And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. 1Ch 13:10 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, **and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark**: and there he died before God.* Yes, when we put our hand out to steady the work of Christ, it is **WE** who are in danger and we do not have the authority.

He is the one with the authority to build, *Mat 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I will build my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* He gives authority to whom He will, and it comes with the proviso that they do everything according to His will, laid out in Scripture. **I ask you, whose authority do you have, man's or Jesus'.**

173. A Lesson in Service *Luke 20: 9 - 18*

Luk 20:9 Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. Luk 20:10 And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. Luk 20:11 And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. Luk 20:12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out. Luk 20:13 Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. Luk 20:14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. Luk 20:15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? Luk 20:16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid. Luk 20:17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Luk 20:18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Having addressed the priests, Jesus turns to the people, the Jews who were surrounding Him, and continues His theme of **authority**, with an illustration, but Luke leaves out this conclusion, that the parable spoke against the priests and the Pharisees, perhaps because it was so obvious. Both Matthew and Mark include it, *Mat 21:45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, **they perceived that he spake of them.** Mat 21:46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.....Mar 12:12 And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.*

If you are a religious person, like the priests and Pharisees, then you should pay strict attention to what Jesus is saying. “A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time”. Here we have “the certain man” again, and **HE** plants a vineyard, and it was not the vinedressers, the husband men who planted it, and if we are right in our assumption that Jesus is talking about His vineyard, it is by the parable, not the

priests or the Pharisees that plant the vineyard either, it was Jesus', *Isa 5:7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.*

Having planted a vineyard, the certain man "*went into a far country for a long time*". He left the husbandmen in charge, just as God left people in charge of Israel, priests, prophets, kings, and of late, in the OT, they had morphed into priests, Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians. When Christ goes from earth, the angel says, *Act 1:10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Act 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.* He goes to the glory for an indeterminate time and leaves his people in charge of the vineyard, *Eph 4:10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

In short, He put us in charge, and it is the same in the OT as the NT, we are under the same trust of God to deliver back to Him, with interest, what was His, like the parable of the Talents. He trusts men to bring to Him the fruit of their labours.

This answers a very problematic question. Can we expect communication from God when He has tasked us with the job, does He keep speaking to us, keeping His hands, so to speak, on the management tiller or does He leave it to us? I say that we know exactly what we have to do, just as the OT guardians of the Law knew what they had to do, so we do not constantly need guidance. That is a very contentious issue, the communication between heaven and earth. Should we expect continuous guidance, do this and don't do that, a continuous direction from the Lord?

If we had a continuous, specific guidance from heaven, then why are there so many different brands of Christianity, so many different denominations? They would all hear the same thing surely, they would all get the same message and if we were obedient, we would all end up doing the same thing because we had heard the same word, we had all been directed by the same word. But Christianity has in reality a diverse message about how God's vineyard is to be run. So we are left with the possibility that we didn't hear Him correctly, or He

never told us what to do exactly, or we are making up our own version of His vineyard and want nothing to do with Him.

The origin and progress of denominations shows that they all change what they believe with time and that the change is not always in line with Scripture. People going to their specific denominational church 100 or 200 years ago, would be surprised by how far their modern counterparts have deviated from what they believed. The modern day leaders would say, well, we have improved our understanding of what God requires, we have better knowledge today, but that is a denial that God is consistent in His dealing with man, and that He gives them the same knowledge, and Scripture says, *Heb 13:8 **Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*** If that is true then there should be no change in the position the church holds and there should be no denominations that teach differently, meaning we have got rid of denominations.

But if God has given the plan for His vineyard to his workers, and that plan is unchanging, why should He even address the subject? When that Lord left talents and pounds to the church, He let the men get on with it, and make money. When He returned to collect His dues, one of His servants said, *Mat 25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, **I knew thee** that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:* The servant **knew** what his master expected. There was no need to tell him what to do, it was all known beforehand. We all know what to do and they knew what to do in Jesus day, and there was no need for further instruction.

The problem is, for the priests and Pharisees, and for all churches of the 21st Century, is why, when you know what God wants, and you know the will of God, why do you persist in opposing Him at every opportunity, trying to get the Lord to change His mind on what He has spoken and try to get scripture rewritten? Stephen summed it up well, in the last thing he said before they killed him, *Act 7:51 "How stubborn you are!" Stephen went on to say. "How heathen your hearts, how deaf you are to God's message! You are just like your ancestors: you too have always resisted the Holy Spirit! Act 7:52 Was there any prophet that your ancestors did not persecute? They killed God's messengers, who long ago announced the coming of his righteous Servant. And now you have betrayed and murdered him. Act 7:53 You are the ones who received God's law, that was handed down by angels—yet you have not obeyed it!"*

How does God talk to us, if at all? It is clear God has spoken to some persons, giving them particular directions, but it is not so for the majority of people, the ordinary man. God generally spoke through the prophets, *Jer 7:25 Since the day*

*that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this **day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them:*** Jer 7:26 *Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers. Jer 7:27 Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee. Jer 7:28 But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth. Jer 7:29 Cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.* This is very much what Jesus is talking about, Luk 20:10 *And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.*

There are some Christians who you would think, are in constant communication with heaven, getting all sorts of instructions about how to live there lives, down to very fine details of what to have for breakfast and where to go today. They must be commended for wanting to be subservient to the Lord but this is not how God appears to work in Scripture and much is left to Godly common sense and the freedom he has given us to choose, Deu 14:24 *And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: Deu 14:25 Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: Deu 14:26 **And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth:** and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household.*

Well if I have the freedom to do certain things, what about the worship of God, doesn't that involve direct instruction. For example, Shouldn't we consider the Gifts of the Spirit, as heaven communicating with earth? One thing to bear in mind is that any worship must be in Spirit and in Truth, Joh 4:23 *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.* You have freedom to express your worship providing it fits those criteria, and that must extend to the use of the gifts of the Spirit. Worship is a one directional activity, it is done towards God not for our benefit.

The gifts are subject to us and they do not have any coercion by God, 1Co 14:32 ***And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.*** 1Co 14:33

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. The gifts are for the body to build up itself, supernatural gifts, but not God controlling men, but men controlling themselves.

The gifts are according to God's will, *1Co 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.....1Co 12:11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, **dividing to every man severally as he will.*** But the gifts are for edification, building up the strength of believers, so that we function as a body, *1Co 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 1Co 12:29 **Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 1Co 12:30 **Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?..... Eph 4:11 It was he who "gave gifts to people"; he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. Eph 4:12 He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, **in order to build up the body of Christ.******* GNB.

It is strange that services of worship, "worthship" to God, are nearly always gatherings of people building themselves up, not worshipping God. Worship of God happens more outside of a meeting than in a meeting, *Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Men need only trust in Christ's teaching and obey it, and there will be peace on earth. Nowhere nor in anything, except in the assertion of the Church, can we find that God or Christ founded anything like what churchmen understand by the Church. Christianity in its true sense puts an end to the State. Leo Tolstoy

You can have a man, pious in the service and then uncouth down the pub, then what is worship worth? You can sing to the Lord anywhere but do you have to sing songs in a public which have more to do with a rave, and call that worship? But surprise, surprise, there is no "service of worship" in the New Testament, the word "worship" is not in the assembly's vocabulary, because they are at worship continually, it is part of being a member of Christ's body, it goes with the territory. In fact, look for the word "worship" in the NT and you will not find it used in the context of services. Your life is worship, you are the Temple of God, *1Co 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God*

dwelleth in you? 1Co 3:17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

Peter Ditzel writes,

The meetings of the *ekklēsia* had three central purposes. One was to eat the Lord's Supper. Jesus instituted this meal as a means to remember His death because through His death, we have life. Nothing is so basic to Christianity. Eating the Lord's Supper keeps us in our place. It reminds us that if it were not for what that bread broken for us and the wine in that cup of the New Testament in His blood symbolize, and the price paid for that, we would be without hope. Sharing the bread and the wine also brings to mind that we are all equal brothers and sisters and all members of the Body of Christ. The Table of the Lord is both humbling and comforting and even a time for rejoicing. But it is never called a worship service because Jesus Christ has already been served on the Cross. If you want a service, it is back in the Catholic Church, and it is called the Mass and it is an abomination.

Another purpose of the assembly was to act as a base for the proclamation of the Gospel to the world. As Paul explained, the assemblies were supposed to support his work of spreading the Gospel to the nations.

Commentators often mistake 1 Corinthians 14 as describing a worship service. But the only person Paul specifically mentions as worshipping in it is the unbelieving (*apistos*) or unlearned (*idiōtēs*) outsider (verses 23-25). First Corinthians 14 shows the other central purpose of the meetings of the *ekklēsia*. It concerns doctrine.

<https://www.wordofhisgrace.org/wp/worship-service/1/>

Why God doesn't talk as much as we would like? It seems obvious, He has told us what to do and it is up to us to serve Him and do it. There is no excuse, and we deviate from the plan at our peril, *Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Heb 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.*

174. The Sending of the Son *Luke 20: 9 - 18*

Luk 20:9 Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. Luk 20:10 And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. Luk 20:11 And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. Luk 20:12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out. Luk 20:13 Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. Luk 20:14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. Luk 20:15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? Luk 20:16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid. Luk 20:17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Luk 20:18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

We established last time, the fact that all people have been told what to do in the Lord's vineyard and that it requires no special revelation, to go back and determine what He said we should do. The governance has been written down and we just have to do it. The husbandmen knew what the job involved, but they chose a different path.

The goal of the men who killed the son of the landowner was simple, they wanted the vineyard for themselves, "*they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the **inheritance may be ours**'*". The plan was simple, all they had to do was displace the owner, usurp the vineyard, change the signs over gate, and go on selling wine as if nothing had happened. A complete takeover, a makeover, and the people would not even notice the difference.

This parable was aimed at the priests, Pharisees, and anyone who did not believe in Jesus, who had not wanted the landowners son, and so they made a land grab, and were now trumpeting their own version of the ancient religion of the Jews. It is the same in the NT times, our times, where the denominations have all put their name up over the Gate, and instead of being Christ's Church, it is the church of England, or the Baptist church, or the Pentecostal church. They all sell a variant on the original product, and the wine of the vineyard has been adulterated in some way, to cater for the new owners of the vineyard, and their

new tastes, *Isa 1:21 How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Isa 1:22 Thy silver is become dross, **thy wine mixed with water.***

In Jesus day, they had made the Temple into a business park, for commerce, a den of thieves instead of a house of prayer. They had denied the resurrection of the dead, they had dressed up in long robes and loved the greetings in the markets, they devoured widow's houses, they had neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy and faith. The religion they taught to the ignorant man, the man who lazily followed their every word, but theirs was a word of their own making and had nothing to do with God.

Sadly, most people are not bold enough to question their religious affiliation. They say, "you will never find a perfect church", and so they tolerate the second best, and do nothing about the status quo. They use the phrase, "you will never find a perfect church", as an excuse to do nothing. But where on earth did Jesus say that, "you will never find a perfect church"? You can find deviant churches, imperfect churches, but why not a perfect church? It is because we are looking for a body of people, we call a church, to all be perfect at the same time, but it is not the body that we should look to, it is ourselves.

A church is composed of individual believers, and that is where you address the question of "perfection". Don't put your personal failure onto the body of Christ, don't be deceitful and hide yourself among the multitude, where is your individual responsibility? You may fall far short of the measure and stature of Christ, but, *Php 3:13 Brothers and sisters, I can't consider myself a winner yet. This is what I do: I don't look back, I lengthen my stride, and Php 3:14 I run straight toward the goal to win the prize that God's heavenly call offers in Christ Jesus.* If you are a believer, like Paul, you will strive to obtain a crown, and you will not be like those mealy mouthed hypocrites who say that, "you will never find a perfect church". You stand for the truth wherever you are and you do not compromise. The devil will always try and make you compromise but we know better.

Another thing that these people do, the people who say, "you will never find a perfect church", is that **they do not compare themselves to Christ**, although they will invoke the name Christian. They will say, "I am a Christian", in spite of saying with the same breath, "you will never find a perfect church", and they will take the name of Christ upon themselves without the slightest intent of becoming like Him. They are hypocrites, Christian by name and not by nature, *Mat 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Mat 10:38*

*And he that taketh not his cross, and **followeth after me, is not worthy of me.** Mat 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*

It is quite clear, that without the total commitment, there is no hope for the individual. But how do you know if a person has a total commitment? Well, you don't know that for other people, and that is not your business, but you know it in yourself, whether Christ means everything to you, whether you are eaten up with finding Him, whether you find His word as honey, whether He consumes you. But you cannot hide in the crowd and say, "you will never find a perfect church", and if you stay standing in the excrement of a non-biblical church, and pointing it out to everyone else that they are standing in the same excrement, but you still stay there, you are just as bad as they are. You cannot hide as an individual, so get real.

They are so blind in the denominations that they lament about it but do nothing. Writing on his website this week <https://canonjohn.com/2023/09/01/a-lament-for-the-church-of-england/> the compromiser J John, of the CoE, lamented for the state of the CoE. He is a hypocrite! He ends his gripe by saying,

Sadly, much of the Church of England has succeeded in doing what the Sanhedrin, the Roman Empire and the sealed tomb failed to do: it has kept Jesus buried. Yet he is not only our greatest hope; he is also the one we will have to give account to. J. John
Reverend Canon.

He signs himself "Reverend Canon", and the poor misguided fool does not see that he has adopted the titles of the very corrupt organisation he is lamenting. I have written to him.

We have seen the wicked husbandmen, and we have seen them in the churches, we have seen the compromisers, we have seen the men who would take over the inheritance from Christ and deny Him the inheritance which is His, and we might think that all is lost. But it isn't. He has sworn to deliver His people from their sins, and He delivers us from this age, this world, *Gal 1:4 Who gave himself for our sins, **that he might deliver us from this present evil world**, according to the will of God and our Father.* He does not let us live among the present evil, He removes us from it, because this world is finished. The Exodus has started.

But there is more, *Luk 20:16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid. Luk 20:17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written,*

The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Luk 20:18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

The good Lord does not only deliver us into His kingdom, but there is a judgement also upon all who reject Him as the owner of the vineyard, and He tells us the certainty of the false churches demise, by the example of a corner stone and a millstone, *Psa 118:22 **The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.** Psa 118:23 This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. Psa 118:24 This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Psa 118:25 Save now (ὠσαννά) , I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.*

I have included a few more verses of the Psalm, because it includes the verse with ὠσαννά in it, the words already said when Jesus entered in to Jerusalem. Dr Gill's comment, as usual, is interesting,

Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord,.... Or, "we beseech thee"; for they are the words of the people, wishing all health and happiness to their king; and it is as if they had said, "vivat rex", that is, "let the king live", or, "God save the King": and no doubt these words were used by the people, when all the tribes united and made David king over all Israel, and when he became the head of the corner; which was attended with the shouts and acclamations of the people, expressing themselves after this manner, And certain it is that these words were used by the followers of Christ, and applied to him, when he made his public entry into Jerusalem, crying, "hosanna" to the son of David. The word "hosanna" is the same with "save now"; and is compounded of the two words in the text thus translated.

In relation to architecture, a cornerstone is traditionally the first stone laid for a structure, with all other stones laid in reference to it. A cornerstone marks the geographical location by orienting a building in a specific direction. It is sometimes called the foundation stone. *Isa 28:16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Isa 28:17 Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.*

Jesus is saying that they, the Jewish leaders, have rejected the foundation stone or corner stone, which God gave them, the stone upon which all their building

would have as a reference to build, the basic building block, in favour of some other stone, *Psa 11:3 If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?* This again, tells us that the wicked husbandmen had gone their own way, and all people who reject the cornerstone of Christ, build another building, another religion. It was not the Temple He was talking about, it was what the Temple represented and that was God and His people. It had, through these builders, made another Temple.

Paul says that Christ is the only foundation on which to build, *1Co 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 1Co 3:11 **For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*** And in rejecting that foundation, men reject Christ and build on sand, *Mat 7:26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: Mat 7:27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.*

That stone was also seen by the prophet Daniel, *Dan 2:34 Thou sawest till that **a stone was cut out without hands**, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Dan 2:35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and **became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors**; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.*

Here we see the dual purpose of “the Stone”, it was a two edged rock, very versatile, it was a cornerstone, setting square the building of the Lord, and it was a millstone, grinding small all the abominations of man, *Deu 9:20 And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time. Deu 9:21 And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, **even until it was as small as dust**: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount.*

Did you note that cry of the people in that verse? “**And when they heard it, they said, God forbid**”. Why did they say this? Did they really mean that they were happy in their current state of religion, happy with the status quo, and therefore they said, “God forbid”? “God forbid” is not in the text, rather it says “may it not become”, and the name of the Lord is not invoked. The people did not want this to happen, but it was too late, and it had been happening since

Israel became God's vineyard, that God was deprived of the fruit, ever since He sent the Prophets to gather his increase, but they were not going to let Him have it.

I think some of the people saw where this was going, and they didn't like it, and they said, no way, don't let it happen, but it was all too late, and this was the pronouncement upon the nation of Israel, the end of the nation.

This played out as it did throughout history, from the very first, when Abel followed Christ and Cain followed the devil, *1Jn 3:11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 1Jn 3:12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? **Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.** 1Jn 3:13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*

175. Jehovah or Caesar? *Luke 20: 19 - 26*

Luk 20:19 And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them. Luk 20:20 And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor. Luk 20:21 And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly: Luk 20:22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no? Luk 20:23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Luk 20:24 Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's. Luk 20:25 And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's. Luk 20:26 And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

Jesus continues to confront His detractors with two more clever arguments, which I sum up as, one about **Taxes** and one about **Death**, death and taxes, the only certainties of this life according to some people. We deal with taxation in this study, and death in the next study.

Jesus was certainly not keeping quiet about what He believed to be true and He courted controversy with relish. The chief priest and scribes wanted to seize Him immediately, but they feared that the people would turn upon them. They decided to spy on Him and trap Him by getting Him to say something that would incriminate Him, and then they had cause to go to the governor on a treason charge, *Luk 20:20 And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.*

The dreaded taxes, the Greek word φόρος = phoros, which means a burden, and they were a burden in Jesus day and they are still a burden today and they always are a cause of conversation. According to the Adam Smith Institute, taxpayers worked 159 days out of 365, for HMRC this year in the UK. The 8th of June is the first day they start working for themselves. The facts are,

- Tax Freedom Day falls on 8th June (2023).
- Brits work 159 days of the year solely to pay taxes.
- UK Taxpayers will fork out over £869.4bn to the Treasury this year, 43.29% of net national income.
- This is the latest Tax Freedom Day since reliable records began in 1995—and compared to earlier (less reliable) data it is the latest since the mid-80s.

We were certainly better off under God, with a 1/10th or tithe, but if you want the protections and services that go with the state, you have to pay for them. These conspiratorial Jews saw a way of catching Jesus in their net. If He answered “Yes”, you should pay taxes, then He would be an enemy of the people for siding with Rome. If He said “No”, you shouldn’t pay taxes, they would get Him as an enemy of the Emperor. It was an exquisite question and they thought they had caught Him at last.

It would need someone with Solomon's Wisdom to give a straight answer to the question. Solomon certainly handled the two prostitutes well, with an insight into human behaviour, that saw through the falsehood and lies that were told about the baby's death. The story was about the birth of two



babies, and the subsequent death of one baby, and both woman claiming that the one that had survived was hers, but Solomon cut through the lies with a knife, just as he threatened to divide the child between the two women.

1Ki 3:23 Then King Solomon said, "Each of you claims that the living child is hers and that the dead child belongs to the other one." 1Ki 3:24 He sent for a sword, and when it was brought, 1Ki 3:25 he said, "Cut the living child in two and give each woman half of it." 1Ki 3:26 The real mother, her heart full of love for her son, said to the king, "Please, Your Majesty, don't kill the child! Give it to her!" But the other woman said, "Don't give it to either of us; go on and cut it in two." 1Ki 3:27 Then Solomon said, "Don't kill the child! Give it to the first woman—she is its real mother." 1Ki 3:28 When the people of Israel heard of Solomon's decision, they were all filled with deep respect for him, because they knew then that God had given him the wisdom to settle disputes fairly. GNB.

Ah, what a pity Solomon did not use the wisdom of God when it came to taxing the Israelites. He set up 12 regional administrators, *1Ki 4:7 Solomon chose twelve regional officers, who took turns bringing food for him and his household. Each officer provided food from his region for one month of the year. CEV.* So far so good you may think, spread the burden of taxes throughout Israel, but if you look at the regions on a map, you will find that it covered the twelve tribes minus Judah. Yes, Solomon taxed everyone except his own tribe and that was the start of the downfall of the kingdom.

The people were burdened by the tribute, and they spoke to Solomon's son about it, *1Ki 12:3 That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying, 1Ki 12:4 Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.* But Rehoboam didn't listen and he went ahead with an even more grievous tax regime, and the rest is, as they say, history. The nation of Israel was torn apart by taxes. So should we Jews pay taxes, was a controversial issue considering the damage taxes had done, and it would have required more wisdom than Solomon applied to the matter.

Jesus does not give them the answer that they want, because it is a simple question with a complex answer. Paul appears to exhort believers to submit to rulers and the taxes that they ask, but is this only good rulers and not oppressive dictators, *Rom 13:3 Rulers are a threat to evil people, not to good people. There is no need to be afraid of the authorities. Just do right, and they will praise you for it. Rom 13:4 After all, they are God's servants, and it is their duty to help you. If you do something wrong, you ought to be afraid, because these rulers have the*

right to punish you. They are God's servants who punish criminals to show how angry God is. Rom 13:5 But you should obey the rulers because you know it is the right thing to do, and not just because of God's anger. Rom 13:6 You must also pay your taxes. The authorities are God's servants, and it is their duty to take care of these matters. Rom 13:7 Pay all that you owe, whether it is taxes and fees or respect and honour. CEV.

Jesus' response is particularly important for our own day, as we object to actions funded directly or indirectly by the government. As happened each time someone attempted to entrap the Son of God, Jesus avoids the dilemma and sets a precedent for Christians to follow. Jesus tells the crowd quite clearly they are to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (v. 21a). This is a statement universally understood as being instruction to pay the tax, which is required by the government that God authorized (cf. Romans 13:1-7).

The command to pay taxes has at least two logical implications:

1. Christians do **not incur guilt by paying taxes**, even if the government commits injustice with the funds. If you argue an immediate link between paying taxes and sin, it puts your Christology in question.
2. Christians **actively sin by not paying taxes**. Jesus does not provide an opt out for your frustration with spending allocations that are intrusive or wasteful.

Therefore, Christians should pay taxes if they are able.

This is an intriguing argument as set forth by Andrew Spencer, "There is no **second order guilt**" 2016,

There is no such thing as second order guilt. **Second order guilt** is a situation where you are morally culpable for the actions of someone else that led to your actions or resulted from your actions. If you pay certain taxes and the taxes are spent on weapons, you have a **second order guilt** for the deaths caused by the weapons. It is the basis for many contemporary decisions, but it is in reality, not true. Our economic reasoning, and so many of our choices would be greatly simplified if more people were aware of this.

For example, some people argue that if you purchase clothing and that clothing was made by a slave somewhere that you are morally culpable for the person's slavery. Or another example: some people argue that if the government funds abortions and you pay taxes that you are morally guilty of abortion. If these sound compellingly familiar, it is

because a great deal of argumentation in the public square is based on this sort of reasoning:

“Don’t use the Firefox browser because their CEO supports gay marriage.” “You have to vote for X because if Y wins there are going to be more abortions in the US. Therefore, if you vote for Z and Y wins the blood of those babies is on your hands.” “I buy fair trade coffee because I don’t want to be guilty of abusing poor Peruvian farmers who sell to non-fair trade companies.”

There are two separate pieces of evidence to consider here. First, there are decisions that we make to leverage our economic or political power to bring about social change. Second, there is the actual assignment of guilt. It’s important to recognize the difference. Boycotting a company over their policies is completely licit and ethically permissible. I think that evangelicals have gone off the rails and use it altogether too much as a blunt object, but people are free to leverage their money, to bring about social change. The sugar boycotts that were implemented to help end slavery in Britain were useful both for raising awareness and for putting economic pressure on the plantation owners that used slave labor. While the money is mine I can spend it as I wish, but only lawfully.

The risk in boycotting is that if it is used too much, it loses its impact. Often, too, the products or companies that replace the banned product are nearly as bad or bad in other ways, so there is a great deal more moral ambiguity than people generally allow. The second is the more significant issue. For many boycotters (or this year, political activists), in order to increase participation, they leap from making boycotting a power play, to assigning moral guilt for a failure to participate.

Part of this, I think, is because for many people the ills that are driving the boycott are really that important. Also, there is the fact that no one wants to admit that they are really just making a power play and trying to beat someone else into submission. But that’s what a boycott really is, like a strike. It can be described in a more genteel way, but it is simply a legitimate means of coercion. However, since the mushy middle, which is the vast majority of the population, is unlikely to take significant action based on a desire to reshape society through genteel economic pressure, activists often inspire commitment to their cause by claiming that someone who doesn’t participate in the boycott, is participating in the evil that is driving the boycott.

I will provide one Old Testament example that there is no second order guilt. In the Old Testament, in 2 Kings 5, after Naaman is healed, he expresses concern about bowing to an idol in the house of Rimmon while supporting his master. In reality, he was both bowing and facilitating the false worship of his master. However, his heart was not worshipping, he was merely fulfilling the terms of his employment and his patriotic duty. Elisha's simple comment, "Go in peace," provides evidence that Naaman was not going to be held accountable for false worship because he in some way helped his master honor a Rimmon. There is no second order guilt in that situation.

Jesus himself encourages people to pay tribute to the occupying nation that had desecrated the temple, slaughtered many of his countrymen, and would someday kill him, despite his absolute innocence. Despite these ills that such tax money would enable, Jesus did not hold himself or others guilty for paying such taxes. There is no second order guilt.

Dealing with the issue of **conscience** directly and **commerce** secondarily, Paul declares eating meat sacrificed to idols licit in 1 Corinthians 8. Buying meat from animals that had once been sacrificed to idols helped to finance the false worship. And yet Paul's concern is with whether the eating the meat will violate someone's conscience due to its having been sacrificed to idols. The purchase of the meat, which could support the false worship, is not considered. In fact, Paul makes it clear that it's not the eating of the meat itself, but the individual's sense that it is wrong; violating the individual's conscience is the problem. There is no second order guilt.

So the issue of taxation is really an attempt to sideline the conscience, to bully one into behaviour and belief that is not Godly. If I pay Caesar, my conscience being weak, without the knowledge of God, is violated. If I have the knowledge of God, I understand that I must honour God, and in doing so, I can pay my taxes with a clear conscience and if I so desire, pay out of my own money for the things that are right, and which Caesar will not fund. *Act 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*

Christ did not answer the wicked men's question with a simple "Yes" or "No". He answered it by posing them a "thought" question, "What is Caesar's and what is God's?" Render to them accordingly, *Luk 20:26 And they could not take hold of*

his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

176. Whose Wife is She? Luke 20: 27 - 33

Luk 20:27 Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him, Luk 20:28 Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Luk 20:29 There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. Luk 20:30 And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. Luk 20:31 And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. Luk 20:32 Last of all the woman died also. Luk 20:33 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.

I first want to address the subject of the resurrection, and, “*the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection*”. The Greek word ἀνάστασις means to stand up, and in the context it means standing up from the dead, *Act 4:10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, **that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, whom ye crucified, **whom God raised from the dead**, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole*. The person Jesus, who they killed, had performed the healing of the lame man thereby proving His resurrection, “*even by him doth this man stand here before you whole*”.

According to the Marcionite heresy (as cited by Tertullian) in the 2nd Century, Jesus was raised, but as a spirit not in the flesh. The JW's have espoused this belief, and they interpret , **Luk 24:39** *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have*, to mean,

“Touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones just as you see that I have.” This was to prove that like angels in the past, **he had materialized** in order to be seen by the disciples. JW.org.

According to the JW's, Jesus did not come physically from the dead, or have a physical resurrection, only a spiritual one in which He could materialise, as and when necessary! But that is not Scriptural. The view of the Sadducees, is not Scriptural either, *Act 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is **no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit**: but the Pharisees confess both*. It would appear to

the Sadducee that this life is all that you had. These views contradict the Scriptures and I think that this story is placed here as preparatory for Christ's own resurrection that we might think about just what it involves.

These people are not alone in misinterpreting of the nature of the resurrection and are not the only ones who have false views of the resurrection. Anti-Semitic ideologies and behaviour grow out of a fundamental root: Jews are a people who believe in God, but *do not embrace Christ and His resurrection*. According to the Jews, Christ was not God and was not resurrected. Jews are a people who believe in God, but do not embrace Christ and His resurrection. According to Jews, Christ was not God and was not resurrected. Judaism, from this perspective, represents negation of Christianity.

According to a recent ComRes survey commissioned by the BBC, 85% of 'active' Christians (those who attend religious services at least monthly) 'believe that there is life after death (e.g. reincarnation, heaven, hell)'. Leaving aside the other 15%, what do the 85% believe about life after death? Do they believe in 'the **resurrection** of the **body**, and the life everlasting', as the Apostles' Creed puts it? Do they 'look for the **resurrection** of the **dead**', as the Nicene Creed puts it? Do they believe that 'the **dead** will be **raised**' 'at the last trumpet', as the Bible puts it, *1Co 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed*.

NO, they do not.

Here's what they believe (NB: it seems they were able to select multiple answers),

You mentioned that you believe that there is life after death. Which of the following forms, if any, do you believe this takes?

Another life where your soul lives on (e.g. Heaven/Hell)	86%
Reincarnation (e.g. starting a new life in a different physical body or form after death)	16%
You become a ghost/a spirit	2%
I believe there is something but I do not know what	2%
A combination of reincarnation and another life where your soul lives on	<1%
A bodily/physical existence in another world	1%
I believe in The Rapture/Judgement Day/Armageddon	-
I believe in the resurrection /second coming of Christ	1%

Other answers	1%
Don't know	4%

Yes, that's right: 99% of active Christians apparently do not believe in the resurrection of the dead!

I say 99% because 'bodily/physical existence in another world' (1%) at least mentions having a body (though not a body that has been raised from the dead), and I don't know what the 'other answers' were (1%). No one selected 'the resurrection/second coming of Christ', which is somewhat worrying. The choices are poorly worded, and there were too many of them, so that could have skewed things (I've omitted several wacky options which no one selected). But the first two answers are clearly inadequate: an immortal soul is not the same as a resurrected body, and reincarnation is not a Christian concept. So we have to look at the remaining answers for any hint that Christians believe in the resurrection of the body.

The Sadducees refused to go beyond the written Torah (first five books of the Bible) and they, unlike the Pharisees, denied the immortality of the soul, bodily resurrection after death. But there is evidence in the Torah and in other scriptures for resurrection, and again we note, that Jesus is speaking under the Old Testament, so we will look in the OT for proof, and incidentally, the fact that so many people do not believe in the physical resurrection, shows that like the Sadducees, modern Christians do not use the OT either.

This is one of the major proofs of resurrection, *Dan 12:1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. Dan 12:2 And **many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake**, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

As is, *Isa 26:19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my **dead body shall they arise**. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and **the earth shall cast out the dead**. Isa 26:20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. Isa 26:21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.* There are other scriptures which say this.

But there were many great proofs of physical resurrection done by Jesus Himself, and this too was in the Old Testament, where He raised several persons from death. These resurrections included the daughter of Jairus shortly after death, a young man in the midst of his own funeral procession, and Lazarus of Bethany, who had been buried for four days

The story of Lazarus is given in great detail and refers to Christ as the embodiment of all of those who are raised to life, *Joh 11:23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Joh 11:24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Joh 11:25 **Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:** Joh 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?* Now you could imply that Jesus was embracing those who died in Him and giving them life in Him, and that as He is the life, they are just raised in Him spiritually.

Jesus refutes this notion by raising Lazarus from the dead, separately from Himself. Jesus goes to the tomb, has the stone covering the opening to be removed, and says, *Joh 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. Joh 11:44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.* Lazarus was raised from the dead, not as a spirit, but in the flesh, and he had to be released from the grave clothes.

This was a resurrection, and a physical one also, and it occurred in the weeks to come, so many people came to see him, *Joh 12:9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, **but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.** Joh 12:10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; Joh 12:11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.* The Sadducees were well aware of what Jesus had done but they refused to believe it, being constrained by their limited world view and the limits they had imposed upon Scripture.

The Sadducees thought that they would be smart and confront Jesus with a puzzle, concerning 7 husbands. The 7 husbands, were brothers, and all consecutively married the woman, and thus it was not polyandry they were talking about, because the marriages were legitimate under Moses Law and they were monogamous. The Sadducees thought they would catch Jesus by asking Him who really had the woman as their wife in the afterlife, of course assuming

that monogamous marriage still existed in the life to come, which they did not believe in.

Jesus could have answered them that the last man would have been her husband, and there was a precedent in the Levirate marriage, the marriage to the brother, *Deu 25:5 If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. Deu 25:6 And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.* Levir is the Latin for brother in law.

Clearly God did not have a problem with it or else He would have said so, *Gen 38:6 And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar. Gen 38:7 And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him. Gen 38:8 And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. Gen 38:9 And Onan knew that the seed should not be his (i.e. it would be his brothers); and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother. Gen 38:10 And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.* The Lord was concerned that the man marries and produces an heir. The fact that they did not produce heirs did not mean that they were not married.

Jesus could have put this example before them as their duty and not to quibble about it, but to obey God. It is interesting that men must have an explanation of how things work before they will obey, and not just do as they are told. But Jesus doesn't say that and answers them with revelation about the afterlife.

Jesus teaches something the Mormons, or latter day Sadducees, LDS, do not believe, because they say,

Within the Mormon Church, family relationships can be sealed, thereby continuing beyond death, via the sealing ordinance. The ordinance is associated with a covenant that takes place inside temples by those authorized to hold the sealing power (?). The only people allowed to enter the temple, be married there, or attend these sealings are those who hold an official temple recommend. Obtaining a temple recommend requires one to abide by Mormon Church doctrine and be interviewed and considered worthy by their bishop and stake president. A prerequisite to contracting an eternal marriage, in addition to obtaining a temple recommend, involves undergoing the temple

endowment, which involves making of covenants of obedience and devotion to God and his commandments.

What a load of NON-biblical tosh. For 2000 years the Christians did not have this additional information, and thank heavens we didn't for it cuts across what Jesus says, *Luk 20:34 And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: Luk 20:35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, **neither marry, nor are given in marriage**: Luk 20:36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.* No mention there of eternal marriages.

The resurrection of the believer is fundamental to Jesus' answer to the Sadducees, but they do not believe in the resurrection. As we have seen, most Christians do not believe in the bodily resurrection either, the Mormons are just modifying the story to suit themselves, the JW's believe in afterlife, the physical resurrection of Lazarus but not the physical resurrection of Jesus.

For us the question is do we believe in what Jesus said and how He interpreted the Scripture or will we believe the other quirky interpretations of man? I will go further into this next time.

177. The God of the Living *Luke 20: 34 - 40*

Luk 20:34 And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: Luk 20:35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Luk 20:36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Luk 20:37 Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Luk 20:38 For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him. Luk 20:39 Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said. Luk 20:40 And after that they durst not ask him any question at all.

The other accounts in Matthew and Mark adds some further important information, *Mar 12:24 And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?* They wandered like the planets, πλανᾶω, wanderers from the truth. They do not know

the scriptures, they literally do not have an idea about them for that is where the word comes from.

Dr John Bechtle brings out the meaning of this Greek word “to know” used in Mark,

You can study the Bible without knowing Greek. That’s how most Christians do it. Even a great Christian scholar like Saint Augustine disliked Greek, and worked in Latin when he was writing theology. But Greek offers advantages. It’s like switching from black and white TV to high definition colour screens. You can see what’s happening either way, but it’s more satisfying to watch the upgraded medium. You can learn to use proven techniques to study Greek words for yourself. (Just go to the Ezra Project Web site and take a look at the new Word Study Course that is available in its completed form).

Ginōskō – **Knowledge that Goes Beyond Information.** We live in the Big Information Age. A 10-year-old with a smart phone has access to more data than you can find in the Library of Congress. One source estimates that Google, Amazon, Facebook and Microsoft collectively store enough bytes to play 2.2 billion years of music. We know so much, but I wonder how much we really know. Social media gives the illusion of intimacy. You can be “friends” with thousands of people, sharing the details of what you ate for breakfast but having no actual contact with them. We know so many, but I wonder how many people we really know. Long before the Internet existed, the Bible dealt with a similar predicament: knowing God without really knowing God.

No question is more important, and we can throw light on the answer by considering the Greek words for “knowing.” The New Testament employs two Greek verbs for “know” most of the time, **Oida** (about 318 times) and **Ginōskō** (about 225 times). Both words are translated as “know,” covering a broad range of possible ideas. With blockbuster words like these, a full investigation would flow into multiple chapters, so we will track one important line of thought.

The two words overlap quite a bit, and they often seem to be used interchangeably. But there are some differences in flavour. Consider two kinds of knowledge: **Knowledge of facts.** You know that $2+2=4$. This is a raw fact. It’s easy to learn, and once you master it, you know all there is to know about it (oida). **Knowledge of people:** You know a friend in a different way. You know facts about them, of course, but

that's not all. You know a person because you have spent time talking and doing things together, building a relationship. It is knowledge gained by experience (ginosko).

This kind of knowledge takes time and it is never complete. Even people celebrating their 50th anniversary can still discover surprises about their spouse! The Greek word oida can describe either kind of knowledge, but it leans a little toward the knowledge of facts. It is related to the word for "see," and it often describes the kind of knowledge that results from observation. You have seen the reality and know it to be true. In some cases, you know the truth because God has revealed it.

The word ginōskō, on the other hand, often describes the kind of knowledge involved in building an intimate relationship with a person. In fact, ginōskō is tied so tightly to relationships that it is used to describe the sexual relations between a husband and wife (Matthew 1:25; Luke 1:34). At the day of judgment, Jesus declared, many would claim to be His followers, but He would say "I never knew you" (Matthew 7:23). Of course, He knew the facts about them, but He had no personal relationship with them. The apostle John loves to use ginōskō to describe this deeper, person-to-person knowledge that characterizes God. Jesus chose ginōskō to describe the intimacy between the Father and the Son, as well as the connection between Himself and His sheep.

We see the two words used in a verse in John, *Joh 8:55 Yet ye have not known **γινώσκω** him; but I know **εἶδω** him: and if I should say, I know **εἶδω** him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know **εἶδω** him, and keep his saying.* They have no experience of who God is as a person, although facts are before them, but Jesus knows Him as a Person and knows the facts about Him.

When Jesus says, "*because ye know **εἶδω** not the scriptures*", He is saying that the people did not know the facts of scripture. They may have known the chapter and verse, what it sounded like, but the meaning just escaped from them. They did not get it. The JW's and the Mormons, and so many so called Christians do not get it either. They think that they can intellectualise the sacred Scriptures that they have the power over them to twist them to suit their meaning, but they are wrong. With their little minds and limited capacity to think, they are as dust in the balance compared to Him who created the Universe.

There is the point of division, between the man who is heaven bound, and the man who is not, and there is nothing that you or I can do about it. You cannot change eido into ginosko, and you cannot change a man who does not know God into one that does know God, because that is a sovereign act. No amount of argument will change them. As far as I can see, Jesus never changed anyone's mind, no man came up to Him and said, I get what you are saying, I have changed my mind about you, and what you say. He always bumps into people and questions them or is teaching them, but He never goes for a pressured response, never does He go for a cheap commitment, never says to a man do this and you ARE saved. He leaves the work of Grace to the Father. The work of the Gospel is the Son's.

I do not see any of the Apostles and disciples giving an altar call, telling people to give their hearts to Jesus, give their lives to Jesus as if in that second, that the whole matter is signed, sealed and delivered in one moment of time. If a man is truly grateful to the Lord, truly desirous of following Him, doing what He said in everything, finding truth for himself and not what another man has regurgitated, that is a whole life which becomes a commitment, not a flash conversion.

I suspect that Jesus' rebuke to the Sadducees, and subsequent explanation on the state of the dead, is primarily for the benefit of disciples, and today that's you and me. Jesus says, *Luk 20:37 Now*

that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He cites the book of Exodus as a proof that God is the God of the living, *Exo 3:6 Moreover he said, **I am the God of thy father**, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* He doesn't say I was the God of Abraham, or I will be the God of Abraham, but "**I am**" the God of Abraham. To those Sadducees, Jesus answers them out of the depths of their own scriptures, since they only held to the Torah. God is not a God of the living at the resurrection of the last day, sometime after the bodies turned to dust, and from our perspective awaiting the last judgement.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all of them long dead. But here God speaks of them as if they were still alive, which they were. Moses died and was buried by God, *Deu 34:5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. Deu 34:6 And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.* Yet he appears at the transfiguration, alive and well, discussing with Elijah, who did not die but was translated, Jesus' coming Exodus, *Luk 9:30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Luk 9:31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.*

From an earthly perspective we are seen to die, *Ecc 9:5 For the living know that they shall die: but **the dead know not any thing**, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Ecc 9:6 Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.* From a heavenly perspective, we live, *Luk 23:42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Luk 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, **To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.***

How is this possible, to be dead and yet alive, surely a paradox, but death is the gateway to life. Perhaps the answer will be found in our linear concept of time. When time ceases, *Rev 10:6 And he swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things which are therein, and the earth and the things which are in it, and the sea and the things which are therein: **That time shall be no longer.*** DRB. The whole nature of order changes and we who were limited by time, constrained by this world, see things differently, and events are ordered differently.

More things are revealed about the afterlife, and they are revealed by the Lord Jesus, The Creator God. We are “the children of the resurrection” or more correctly, *Luk 20:36 for neither can they die any more, for they are equal to angels, and **are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.*** “Sons of the resurrection” is a very strange term, since the resurrection is a general event, and the wicked are raised at the same time, *Joh 5:29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

What does affiliation mean? It comes from the Latin, to adopt a son, and we are affiliated to God, adopted as sons, for so the word means. *1Jn 3:2 Beloved, **now are we the sons of God**, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* What are we like in the resurrection? I was prompted to speculate from, *Mat 18:7 Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! Mat 18:8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: **it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.** Mat 18:9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.*

Now the only person who has come back and knows about the afterlife is Jesus, and He does not tell us much about it. He appears to say that you go to the next life carrying the marks of this life, “: **it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire**”. I wondered whether the people who reject Christ are not healed, as He does not bear their sins and diseases, and that they go into eternity with the accumulation of their diseases and that come with age?

It says in Luke that punishments are proportionate, *Luk 12:48* **But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.** *For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.* So those bound for hell, do not cease their suffering in death but continue in it. The sons of the resurrection are spared this.

They are spared from death, delivered from it, “Neither can they die any more”. That is an amazing thought. We will not be able to mortally wound ourselves, we will not catch any fatal diseases, our bodily system, whatever it consists of, will never wear out, no one will kill us, no accident will overwhelm us, and we will in consequence, live forever by God’s grace. This possibly reflects the spiritual nature of our being non-corporeal and the Almighty keeping us from any harm. The laws of physics as we know them do not seem to apply in the world to come, and it appears to be free of the law of Entropy, as it is free of the law of time.

There is another remarkable fact of the life to come is “they are equal unto the angels”, *isangellos, ἰσάγγελος*. Now are we like them in form or are we like them in every respect? Is it just in regard to the fact that we do not marry, or do we become asexual beings? Do we lose our gender altogether? And are we like the angels in respect of their ability to be multi-dimensional beings? The only thing which is certain is that the reason marriage no longer exists is because we are like them and God has decreed that we shall not procreate, for they “neither marry, nor are given in marriage”.

God is the God of the living, *Luk 20:38* *For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: **for all live ζάω unto him.*** Not biological life but life eternal and abundant, *Joh 10:9* *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. Joh 10:10* *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: **I am come that they might have life ζωή, and that they might have it more abundantly.*** *Joh 10:11* *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*

God is the everlasting source of life, the life Giver, the Sustainer, but only on His terms. Those who do not like Him to rule over them will not have Him sustain them and they will die, *Mal 4:1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. Mal 4:2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. Mal 4:3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.*

And that was the end of all questioning by the scribes, *Luk 20:39 Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said. Luk 20:40 And after that they durst not ask him any question at all.* He had shown them enough and that was all that He could do. They were either with Him or against Him.

178. Who is the Messiah? *Luke 20: 41 - 44*

Luk 20:41 And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son? Luk 20:42 And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Luk 20:43 Till I make thine enemies thy footstool. Luk 20:44 David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?

Having shown the Sadducees that they had no idea about the scriptures or the power of God, and having refuted their ideas from the Scripture, our Lord moves on to show the Pharisees that they have misunderstood the Scripture also, *Mat 22:41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Mat 22:42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David.*

Jesus is about to teach a lesson in semantics, and those who would make the Scriptures literal must be careful. The Christ, or in Hebrew, the Messiah, was not David's literal son. If you read Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, you can see how cleverly Carroll uses logic and semantics.

"Come, we shall have some fun now!" thought Alice. "I'm glad they've begun asking riddles—I believe I can guess that," she added aloud. "Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?" said the March Hare.

"Exactly so," said Alice.

"Then you should say what you mean," the March Hare went on.

"I do," Alice hastily replied; "at least-at least I mean what I say-that's the same thing, you know."

"Not the same thing a bit!" said the Hatter. "Why, you might just as well say that 'I see what I eat' is the same thing as 'I eat what I see'!"

"You might just as well say," added the March Hare, "that 'I like what I get' is the same thing as 'I get what I like'!"

"You might just as well say," added the Dormouse, which seemed to be talking in its sleep, "that 'I breathe when I sleep' is the same thing as 'I sleep when I breathe'!"

"It is the same thing with you." said the Hatter,"

The Messiah is called David's son but David's son is not the Messiah.

Jenny Lederer, assistant professor and linguistics advisor in the Department of English Language and Literature at San Francisco State University says:

"Semantics is the study of meaning in context; it's the investigation of how words, phrases and sentences evoke concepts and ideas in our minds. As we learn language, we attach meanings to words by learning what objects and concepts each word refers to.

"'It's just semantics' is a common retort people use when arguing their point. What they mean is that their argument or opinion is more valid than the other person's. It's a way to be dismissive of language itself as carrier for ideas. It implies that ideas and arguments can be separated from the words and phrases used to encode those ideas. The irony, of course, is that the words and phrases we use *are* the ideas. There is no way to communicate a complex argument or message without language. Language and thought are completely interconnected. In fact, words shape concepts and can lead to drastically different understandings of the same thing. For example, inheritance taxes can be called 'death taxes' or 'estate taxes.' These two political phrases frame the same tax law in drastically different ways. Semantics really matters."

Why did not God use plain language in making this statement about the Messiah? Why didn't He say "Jehovah said to the Messiah sit on my right hand", or "David's enemies shall be his footstool, and the Messiah's enemies shall be His footstool". The things that could be said precisely to make it absolutely clear what was intended are numerous, but the Scripture remains deliberately obscure.

Let us read the verse in context, *Psa 110:1 A Psalm of David. **The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*** *Psa 110:2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Psa 110:3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. Psa 110:4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. Psa 110:5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. Psa 110:6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. Psa 110:7 He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.*

The Lord establishes a few facts that we will just look at. The Psalm as read by Jesus is not contested as the work of King David, by the Pharisees. The grammar and syntax as Jesus explains the verse is not questioned by the Pharisees. The scriptures have retained their integrity over the millennia, word perfect.

The passage Jesus quotes is used by the NT writers as showing the coming of the Gospel, the coming of the Messiah as a Priest and King, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Last Judgement. Christ is both “the root and the descendent of David”, *Rev 22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. **I am the root and the offspring of David,** and the bright and morning star.* He descended from David according to the flesh, and was declared to be the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead, *Rom 1:3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was **made of the seed of David according to the flesh;** Rom 1:4 **And declared to be the Son of God with power,** according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*

The New Testament teaches that this invitation to “sit at Jehovah’s right hand” was fulfilled when Jesus ascended into heaven and sat down, *1Pe 3:22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.....Heb 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.....Heb 10:12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; Heb 10:13 **From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.***

This Psalm formed part of Peter’s argument in the sermon he preached on the day of Pentecost, *Act 2:32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Act 2:33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and*

*having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. Act 2:34 **For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Act 2:35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Act 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.***

This is a remarkable conversation between two persons of the Godhead. This Psalm is clearly a Messianic psalm, quoted as such at least twelve times in the New Testament, where Christ specifically applies Psalm 110:1 to Himself, claiming that He is not just the son of David, but David's Lord.

Why is it made so obscure? Is this the case or not? The Hebrew reads,

לְדוֹד מִזְמוֹר נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה לֵאדֹנָי שֶׁב לִימִינִי עַד־אֲשִׁית אִיבֶיךָ הַדָּם לִרְגְלֶיךָ:

Psa 110:1

"Jehovah to Adonai", The Lord said to my Lord, and Adonai means "my Lord", David's Lord. And as David, who writes the Psalm says this of Adon, and it **is clearly the Lord of David**, who is speaking to God the Father. David is **listening in** to a conversation between Jehovah and Adon. David is not being addressed but is a recorder, a bystander to this great conversation between the Father and the Son. If the word is not plain, then the people not getting the picture are blind, *2Co 4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 2Co 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

There was nothing hidden in the 110th Psalm, the language made it clear who was speaking to whom, it was prophetic of the coming Messiah, the Christ, and God was promising Him that He would put His enemies under His feet. That must have stung the religious leaders, because they would be put under His feet, as His footstool, *Psa 110:1 A Psalm of David. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*

The Jews, or at least the Pharisees, thought that the Psalm spoke of David, and David's enemies being put under his feet. Somehow David would have to be resurrected if this was the case, and many people believe in the literal fulfilment of the OT, like the Pharisees, *Mat 22:42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David.* No He was the Son of God and **became son of David by His resurrection.**

Let me explain. Paul speaking to the Jews in Psidian Antioch, gave them this address, the Gospel, Act 13:32 *And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, Act 13:33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; **as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.** Act 13:34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Act 13:35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Act 13:36 **For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:** Act 13:37 **But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.** Act 13:38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: Act 13:39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

David died and was buried, but Jesus became the son of David, heir to the promises of David, when he arose from the dead. The second Psalm speaks of a resurrection victory, *Psa 2:6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. Psa 2:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, **Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.** Psa 2:8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*

There is in Scripture an elusive truth in some verses. Truth is there, immediate truth, but it may not be the ultimate truth or the absolute truth. When David writes, it is with a mist, or haze over the meaning of what he sees, and he sees only a limited distance into that future time. What he see is true, what he makes of it, we know not. If the disciples did not know that Jesus would die and be resurrected, we might assume that David did not know either, *Pe 1:10 Some prophets told how kind God would be to you, and they searched hard to find out more about the way you would be saved. 1Pe 1:11 The Spirit of Christ was in them and was telling them how Christ would suffer and would then be given great honor. So they searched to find out exactly who Christ would be and when this would happen. 1Pe 1:12 But they were told that they were serving you and not themselves. They preached to you by the power of the Holy Spirit, who was sent from heaven. And their message was only for you, even though angels would like to know more about it. CEV.*

David could not know that his nation of Israel, the nation that he had fought the Philistine Goliath for, would in one generation be torn apart and slowly decline over the next 1000 years, to become a servant of a nation which did not even

exist when he wrote the Psalms, the nation of Rome, and that this would happen in the person of his greater son, Christ. For David, it was all on the up, and I cannot think why he would even think of his nation's collapse, but it did collapse.

For us, it is obvious in hindsight what was happening, we look in our rear view mirror and smile and say yes, it's obvious to us what is happening. But it wasn't to David, and God's plan was triumph through the death of His Son, something which never entered the Jewish mind set or their world view. The traditional view was held by the Pharisees but it was Great David's greater Son who would triumph, and there it was written in plain sight, *Luk 20:44 David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?*

Mat 22:46 And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions. Game, set and match to the Messiah.

179. Popularity Luke 20: 45 - 47

Luk 20:45 Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples, Luk 20:46 Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; Luk 20:47 Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

I was talking with my wife the other day about a perennial subject of getting rid of the accumulated junk amassed over our lives, in preparation for our departing this mortal coil and going on to be with Christ, and we got on to the subject of personal things, such as school reports, things that we had or had not achieved in our youth. She expressed a view that she would prefer to have it all burned, leave no trace of what was, to her, a sinful past. I disagreed because, like it or not, the things happened, they were true, and by the Grace of God, He has saved us from the lives we had, and we are not the same persons now. What we are now, is a measure of the change brought about by Christ and we should not aim to expunge the past, however cringe worthy it seems.

I was looking at one of my reports from the sixth form at school, and in the spring term of 1962, when I was taking science for A levels, there was this comment by the master on my pure maths examination,

“The exam has shown that there are many gaps in his knowledge. I think he now appreciates this fact, and hope that he will make a determined effort to improve his knowledge”. Exam 8%.

We could loaf, and we did loaf, and we did no work at all as, I remember, but we had a marvellous time in the world of our youth and life was one long party of irresponsibility. I got that mark of 8%, and I was not bottom of the class by any means. The headmaster added, with stern disapproval,

“These comments are to my mind surprisingly mild in view of the abysmally low mark. It must be brutally pointed out that he is a long way behind already, and that unless he is prepared for very long hours of patient tedious study, at school and at home, he might as well give up altogether”.

Every thing to me was a joke, and irresponsibility was my chief aim. I did improve, but as I see myself and look back through the years, I hate what I was, a waster, a moron, a privileged entitled idiot, without responsibility, and Oh, how wise and clever I thought I was, to despise the good efforts of better men, and frustrate them in their attempts to improve me. I thank God particularly that I did not live in this age of social media, or else to add to my later shame, there would have been pictures and movie clips of that young aspirational fool that was me. But you see, there but for the grace of God go I, and to hide the past is something we do if we want to appear better than we are, and I am certainly not good, as far as my past is concerned.

But that is how I was, and although I did not see it at the time, and no doubt would not have seen it without the new eyes Christ gave me, it happened. And why should I want to cover it up? I am not proud of who I was, I try to dissociate myself from that person, but I must conclude that I was him, and no matter how much I hate him, I cannot remove him from my past without removing me. So I should have a realistic view of my past, and although it happened, so did Christ, and I am a new creation.

This warning that Jesus gave was to people like me who had a false perception of their own worth, *Luk 20:46 "Be on your guard against the teachers of the Law, who like to walk around in their long robes and love to be greeted with respect in the marketplace; who choose the reserved seats in the synagogues and the best places at feasts; GNB.* The scribes saw themselves in a certain light, they had a perception that they were knowledgeable, and they dressed the part to give them an air of scholarly superiority. They liked to be seated separately, in the reserved seats, so everyone would think that they were somebody, and they just

loved it to be greeted in public places. They had discovered the cult of self two thousand years before me, but I slotted into it just as well.

Of course, Jesus is speaking to the disciples and religious leaders, scribes, and it would seem that Luke has given a cut down version of the dialogue, for in Matthew he adds, the **Pharisees**, to the people He addresses, *Mat 23:14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.* And the message was to others, *Mat 23:1 Then spake Jesus to **the multitude, and to his disciples**, Mat 23:2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:* The scribes, the Pharisees and the multitudes and disciples.

Who are they but the religious people of the day and today? No, it couldn't possibly be you could it, and you are incensed that I dare accuse you of being like them? You read this narrative and you say, that's not me, without even a sideways glance at your image in the mirror. You quickly read it and pass on by, walking on the other side of the road, and you do not even think that Jesus is warning you and me, as well as the scribes and Pharisees. Think about it and if the hat fits, repent.

You like to see yourself as a good outstanding citizen of the kingdom, but you have developed a habit of covering the bad things that you do with long prayers, *Luk 20:47 Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.* You say, I know I do wrong, but I try and make up for it in prayer. Its like when some well meaning person says, "I'll pray for you", and although you never asked them to and did not tell them what they should pray, they pray, and go away satisfied that they have done their duty for you. They never think that prayer is a cover for not doing something, the last resort of a scoundrel. There is no help coming from them even when they could help, only fine words, bloviation, and they think that they are being holy.

They devour widows houses, they are avaricious, cunning, always on the make and yet they have the temerity to come before the Almighty in prayer. He is not the blind god, an unseeing God, who does not know what is going on. It is the same as cheating, stealing, lying, making money out of someone who least can afford it, exploiting the weak and defenceless, the widows and the fatherless. The "Christian" picks on the weak, the less knowledgeable, those who are different, and without helping them, condemns them, and then they are found in churches praying on their knees, but to whom do they pray. Some people are very elegant in prayer but that does not mean they are sincere or honest.

Discovering self must be essential if we are to destroy our self deceits. The maxim "Know thyself," though not an invention of Socrates, is nonetheless a perfect expression of his whole philosophical approach. For Socrates, all knowledge must start with the individual, with the cultivation of the rational part of his/her soul. Only then is he/she in the position to acquire knowledge of the world around them, the world of objects, things, and other people. But this philosophy is a falsehood, because it presumes that a man is capable of finding out anything rational, and that "all knowledge must start with the individual", and that is clearly a falsehood. It presumes that man is not sinful, his reasoning is unbiased, and he believes it is not compromised and he thinks that he has no deadly prejudices. But he does have a prejudice because he hates Christ.

The Lord looks on the heart of man, *1Sa 16:7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.* God sees us as we are and He is the One who will instruct us, not our sinful selves. There is only One who can see you as you are, and unless He communicate it with you, you will have a false view of yourself, *Psa 139:1 You have looked deep into my heart, LORD, and you know all about me. Psa 139:2 You know when I am resting or when I am working, and from heaven you discover my thoughts. Psa 139:3 You notice everything I do and everywhere I go.*



Everybody has a self image. Self-image is the personal view, or mental picture, that we have of ourselves. Self-image is an "internal dictionary" that describes the characteristics of the self, including such things as intelligent, beautiful, ugly, talented, selfish, and kind. Do you sneak a peak at yourself in the mirror? What do you see? Do you shift your body to make it more favourable to look at, do you breath in to look slimmer, smile, screw up the eye so that you cannot see the wrinkles? Then you relax and go about your business and all your efforts at being someone else remain in the mirror.

People see themselves differently from how they see others. They are immersed in their own sensations, emotions, and cognitions at the same time that their experience of others is dominated by what can be observed externally. This basic asymmetry has broad consequences. It leads people to judge themselves and their own behaviour differently from how they judge others and those others' behaviour. We think on our inside and judge on the outside and that is the path to hypocrisy. I suppose you could call it deliberately being blindsided to the

double standard that you have made, self deceit or wilful deceit, its leads to the same thing.

Mathew is far more detailed at this point and I have no hesitation including his Gospel as very relevant to Luke's account. Jesus warns all men that they can be trapped by these religious people, and that you are in danger of becoming just like them, *Mat 23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, **ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves***. You can get into their way of thinking and doing, and you can become a scribe and a Pharisee, a hypocrite of the first order, and that is why Jesus warns us about them, "Beware of the scribes" unless you too become like them, and **"make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves"**.

The Lord lists 7 woes to these religious people, and in turn to us if we adopt their behaviour, *Mat 23:4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers*. The seven "woes" are,

1. *Mat 23:13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.*
2. *Mat 23:14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.*
3. *Mat 23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.*
4. *Mat 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*
5. *Mat 23:25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.*
6. *Mat 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.*
7. *Mat 23:29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,*

Jesus the teacher has given His summary evaluation of where the scribes and Pharisees, the multitudes and the disciples are heading if they do not listen to what He is saying. Just as my teachers summed up my attitude to learning and gave me a just rebuke for my abysmal attitude to taking my subjects seriously, and not treating them and the teachers as a joke, Jesus points to where we end up if we treat Him as a joke.

The scribes and Pharisees had failed their religious examination. They were doing well on some things, they prayed, they went overseas evangelising, they tithed all of their herbs, they washed their plates half clean, they appeared to be good, beautiful people and they commemorated the prophets by building their memorials. But they were hypocrites and doing half of the things was not good enough.

You can look at other people and say, well, I got a higher mark than him, he only got 8% and I got 60%, and go your way with a smug smile. Someone may go away with a smugger look having obtained 99%, but in terms of God's examinations only 100% is a pass mark. Those with anything lower have failed miserably, *Jas 2:10 If you obey every law except one, you are still guilty of breaking them all.* CEV. All the good things that I did count for nothing, *Eze 18:24 But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? **All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned:** in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.*

If we only know 8% of the Gospel, what use is that? Did I miss something that would have made me different and more like His son's and daughters. 8% is no good, 50% is no good, 99% is no good, only 100% is good enough. Do we really only want to be 8% like Him?

Well, it is impossible to get 100% in the examinations of righteousness. Yes it is, for you and me, and that is where we turn to One who never fails, *Php 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, **but that which is through the faith of Christ**, the righteousness which is of God by faith: Php 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; Php 3:11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*

If I would be like the Master, I must listen and learn from Him, not the foolish men who have the teaching all wrong.

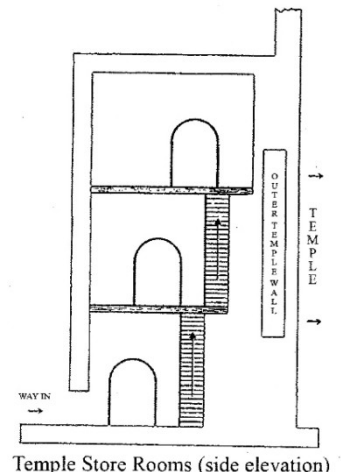
180. Two Mites Luke 21: 1 - 4

Luk 21:1 And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. Luk 21:2 And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. Luk 21:3 And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: Luk 21:4 For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

And.....

Mar 12:41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. Mar 12:42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

What is the treasury and where was money stored? The Temple was built with three storage areas around it, chambers, into which was put all manner of "treasure", *1Ki 6:9 So he built the house, and finished it; and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar. 1Ki 6:10 And then he built chambers against all the house, five cubits high: and they rested on the house with timber of cedar.* I presume that Herod had rebuilt Solomon's Temple in the same manner and it too had these chambers.



Temple Store Rooms (side elevation)

Mammon was kept separate from the worship of God but it was necessary for the upkeep of the Temple. It was in these chambers that I think they found the Law of Moses, *2Ch 34:14 And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD given by Moses. 2Ch 34:15 And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. 2Ch 34:16 And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do it. 2Ch 34:17 And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen.*



The priests had put collection points outside of the Temple into which people put their offerings called "the treasury", and according to Easton's dictionary,

It does not appear that there was a separate building so called. The name was given to the thirteen brazen chests, called “trumpets,” from the form of the opening into which the offerings of the temple worshippers were put. These stood in the outer “court of the women.” “Nine chests were for the appointed money-tribute and for the sacrifice-tribute, i.e., money-gifts instead of the sacrifices; four chests for freewill-offerings for wood, incense, temple decoration, and burnt-offerings”

Jesus watched with curiosity **how** the people gave their money. He watched the outward and the inward giving, the show that they made and what was in their heart, what they were thinking as they gave. As we have said before, it is the Lord’s money, and although we are His servants, you would think that the money is ours the way we treat it.

God showed particular care for the widows, *Exo 22:21 Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Exo 22:22 Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. Exo 22:23 **If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; Exo 22:24 And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.*** A salutary warning to the world.

Collecting money must have been a lucrative business and the priesthood had a lot of gold in Jesus day, in fact when Josephus writes about the fall of Jerusalem, he explained,

.... the reason why every stone was overturned in the city (including those that made up the very foundations) was the Jews were accustomed to hide their gold and other valuables in the walls of their homes. The Temple itself was also the treasury of the Jewish nation. [JW 6.5.2] When the fires consumed the whole of the Temple and City, the gold melted and descended into the cracks and crevices of the stone foundations. In order to recover this melted gold, the Tenth Legion had the Jewish captives uproot every stone of the Temple and the whole of the City. So much gold was discovered in this fashion that the price of the metal in the Roman Empire went down half of its pre-war value. [JW 6.6.1] This action of looking for gold by overturning the stones (including all foundation stones) left Jerusalem as a vast quarry of dislodged and uprooted stones in a state of unrecognized shambles.

The Sadducees who controlled the priesthood in Jesus day lived a life of luxury in Jerusalem, and the Temple was the place where they made their money and as we have seen, Jesus flung out the merchants of profit from His Father's house. Today people in the ministry think that they are entitled to live off of the people of God and not work for themselves as Paul did. They draw parallels with the Levitical priests and claim that a full time ministry requires full time support, except there are no more Levitical priests. But think about it, if a man is called and gifted by God, can he not also earn his living, or does that calling of God make him unemployable? Is it an excuse to create a separate class of people?

For this reason I will not financially support a non-working minister, because they are lazy creatures, and if it is necessary for an ordinary brother to work, if they want to eat, so then must the ministers, *2Th 3:8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 2Th 3:9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. 2Th 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, **that if any would not work, neither should he eat.***

The widow Jesus watches may have been young or she may have been old, but she was poor and it seems strange to me that a poor widow would have to give, when they had so much gold and silver in the Temple treasury. Didn't the priesthood have to be charitable or was the giving one way? Surely the tithe had an element of charity in it? Weren't the priests to give also? The tithe was for 3 main purposes,

- The Levitical, or sacred tithe. *Num 18:21 And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. Num 18:22 Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die. Num 18:23 But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance.*
- The tithe of the feasts *Deu 14:22 Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. Deu 14:23 And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always. Deu 14:24 And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when*

the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: Deu 14:25 Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose:

- *The tithe for the poor Deu 14:28 At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: Deu 14:29 And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.*

Weren't the priests to be like God to the people, and the people themselves a royal priesthood, *Exo 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: Exo 19:6 **And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.** These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.* How could they shut themselves from giving to this widow? Perhaps because they had lost sight of what true religion was and that it was not about money, *Jas 1:27 What God the Father considers to be pure and genuine religion is this: to take care of orphans **and widows in their suffering** and to keep oneself from being corrupted by the world.* GNB.

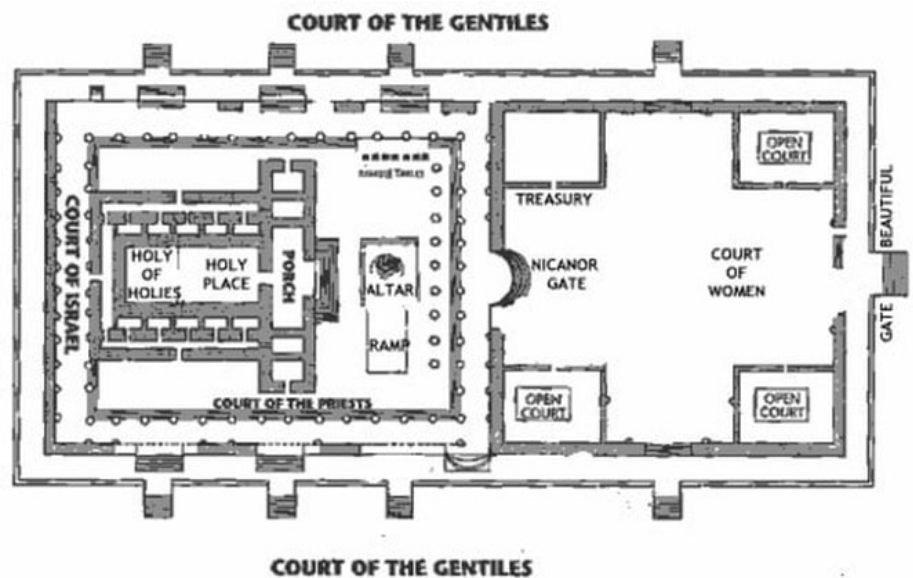
Jesus was watching as the people gave, as He watches today, and you cannot deceive Him as to "how" you give but you might deceive your fellow men. He wasn't watching "how much" or "how little" they gave, only how they gave. There were the people who gave nothing but engaged in religion, and they were mean and covetous, accumulating wealth for themselves but giving none of it to the service of God, yet they asked God for many favours. He saw the rich people who could afford to give, yet not making eye contact with this poor ragged widow, too ashamed to glance at her because if he caught her pleading eye, and he had to greet her, a fellow Israelite, he would have to give her something.

Then there was the generous heart, who came up to the treasury in gratitude, praising God for His abundant mercy to him, and he could not understand why he was so blessed, and he stood giving thanks for all the great goodness of God, his health to earn, his business, his house and home, his brothers and sisters, the list went on.

The treasury that the people went to, was situated at the entrance to the Women's Court, where the 13 coffers were, and was through the Golden Gate or Beautiful Gate, the Eastern Gate of the city, although the original Gates were

destroyed long ago, with the city, and what you see today is an attempt to recreate it in its former glory.

The Eastern Gate, or Beautiful Gate was where Peter and John greeted the lame man, *Act 3:2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;* it was the gate through which Jesus had entered the Temple only days earlier and this man may have seen Jesus. It was a good place to target the people going in to make offerings.



By the way, these informal offerings are nothing like the mugging of captive audiences in a church building today, they were not tied to a particular time when they should give. Well, Peter and John, did not have any money, *Act 3:6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk,* and unlike the priests on the other side of the gate who had plenty of God's money, and unlike the modern manipulators who have money but no God given ability to heal, they got the man walking. Peter and John did not have money but they did have the Spirit of God, and they healed the man.

Some of those coming into the court of the women, would have passed by this lame man before he was healed, and not offered him a thing, likewise when they went out. The generous man would have given to the poor on the way in and on the way out and his face would have shone. But the Pharisees were another class of givers altogether, *Mar 7:9 And Jesus continued, "You have a clever way of rejecting God's law in order to uphold your own teaching. Mar 7:10 For Moses commanded, 'Respect your father and your mother,' and, 'If you curse your father or your mother, you are to be put to death.'* *Mar 7:11 But you teach that if people have something they could use to help their father or mother, but say, 'This is Corban' (which means, it belongs to God), Mar 7:12 they are excused from helping their father or mother. Mar 7:13 In this way the teaching you pass on to others cancels out the word of God. And there are many other things like*

this that you do." GNB. They were like the Indian givers, which is a pejorative expression used to describe a person who gives a "gift" and later wants it back or who expects something of equivalent worth in return for the item.

The widow was poor and because she had next to nothing, I am assuming she could not afford to live in the city of Jerusalem, but lodged somewhere less expensive, possibly at Bethany or Bethphage. She appears to have no one to support her, and with Passover coming upon her she had to rely on the charity of her neighbours to share the Passover lamb. Possibly because she could not partake in the festival and certainly could not afford a lamb, she went to the Temple with the two mites, which make a farthing, and that was sufficient for the priests to buy two sparrows, *Mat 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.*

This was her Passover offering, the same offering of the Leper cleansed, *Lev 14:4 Shall command him that is to be purified, to offer for himself two living sparrows, which it is lawful to eat, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. Lev 14:5 And he shall command one of the sparrows to be immolated in an earthen vessel over living waters.* DRB. Perhaps in her simplicity she had given this offering to the Lord instead of a lamb? I even wonder whether Jesus invited her to His last supper, the Passover, because there were more than 12 disciples and Jesus had many friends, many female disciples who were the loyalist disciples and they stayed with him to the crucifixion, and this would be characteristic of His generosity.

Whatever the reason for her poverty and where she went afterwards we know not, but this we know, *Luk 21:3 And he said, "I tell you that this poor woman has put in more than all the others. Luk 21:4 Everyone else gave what they didn't need. But she is very poor and **gave everything she had.**"* CEV. She gave everything, all that she had to sustain her life, she had committed financial suicide. She had no supper, no food, if she had to pay rent there was nothing to pay with. She had bought her life to an end as surely as if she had put a bullet in her brain.

Was it financially prudent to give her last means of survival to God? I think that she had shown her dependence upon God in a very practical way, a way which we do not. We thank God for all that we have, but perhaps we should take a step closer to that cliff, and as we throw things away, we lighten ourselves for the leap into the known and the hands of God. The widow challenges our thinking.

If you think of all those rooms, nested about the Temple of God, it is a picture of Treasure in Heaven, *Luk 18:22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto*

him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have **treasure in heaven**: and come, follow me. Luk 18:23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. We exchange the money we are loaned in this life by God, for a different currency in Heaven. It is a test of our faith how we use what God has given us.

I expect we shall see this widow sitting in the Chief seats of Heaven for the example she set.

181. Farewell Temple on Earth *Luke 21: 5 - 9*

Luk 21:5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, Luk 21:6 As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. Luk 21:7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? Luk 21:8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. Luk 21:9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.

Jesus now addresses a subject which must capture the imagination of everyone, judgement, the destruction of the Temple, Wars, Persecution and the Second Coming of Christ. People's imagination and curiosity get the better of them and they divine lots of strange theories and it becomes a topic that divides rather than unites believers. That is, I think, because the events are not crystal clear and the times and seasons are not known by man, and that leads to gross speculation.

There is no doubt about these coming events, and make no mistake about it, they will come, and Jesus will come like a thief in the night. Much more important to us is that we get into the Kingdom of Heaven, not that we spend our time in guessing about these events, *2Pe 3:10 But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that Day the heavens will disappear with a shrill noise, the heavenly bodies will burn up and be destroyed, and the earth with everything in it will vanish. 2Pe 3:11 Since all these things will be destroyed in this way, what **kind of people should you be?** Your lives **should be holy and dedicated to God**, 2Pe 3:12 as you wait for the Day of God and do your best to make it come*

soon—the Day when the heavens will burn up and be destroyed, and the heavenly bodies will be melted by the heat. GNB.

We are dealing with Luke's account and there are differences of emphasis between the Gospel accounts. Matthews occurs on the Mount of Olives and Luke's appears to follow on from the account of the widow in the Temple proper. I think that Jesus spoke about it more than once, but it is the same story, which in Luke opens up with some people speaking of the magnificent opulence of the Temple, *Luk 21:5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts.* When Herod built the Temple, I imagine it was a good PR exercise. He built Caesarea for the Romans, Masada for himself and The Temple for the Jews, amongst other works. It may have been well intentioned but it led to the Jews getting aspirations of grandeur and independence from Rome. It led to the ultimate battle with their great enemy, culminating in the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in AD 70. The seeds of destruction were already planted and growing.

In this sacred place of the Jews, the Temple at Jerusalem, Jesus has some disturbing news for them. It was all going to come to an end, come crashing down, and this grand edifice would be no more. Jesus says, *Luk 21:6 As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.* This building was not complete in Jesus day, in fact it wasn't completed until 63 AD. According to Josephus, Herod believed that building the temple would be a task great enough "to assure his eternal remembrance" (*Antiquities* 15.380). Herod's temple was one of the wonders of the ancient world, a beautiful building and a marvel of engineering. Josephus, who was an eyewitness of the temple, reported, "The exterior of the building lacked nothing that could astound either mind or eye. . . . To approaching strangers it appeared from a distance like a snow-clad mountain; for all that was not over laid with gold was of purest white" (*Jewish War* 5.222–23).

It must have seemed astonishing that the building where they were standing, so firm and well constructed, would ever be destroyed, *Luk 21:7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?* Here they ask two questions,

1. When will this happen?
2. What sign will there be of this event?

It seems to be a repeated question, for is not "when" it happens, going to be the at the same time as the "sign" when it shall come to pass? A better rendering is, *Luk 21:7 And they asked Him, saying, Teacher, then when will these things be? And what will be the sign when these things are about to happen?* LITV. They

were asking “when” and “**what**” is the warning sign, when it was about to happen, what was the warning siren was that would give them an early warning of events.

The events, some of which we shall come to later on in this chapter, are as follows, and these are described by Jesus in the following divisions of chapter 20.

- Destruction of the Temple
- War and persecution
- Destruction of Jerusalem
- The Coming of the Son or Man

First and most importantly it is necessary that we understand who is telling us this and more so as time goes on and we forget. It concerns a message from God, *Luk 21:8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.* This is from the AV and is not quite correct, it should read, *Luk 21:8 And He said, Watch that you not be led astray. **For many will come on My name, saying, I AM!** Also, The time has come! Do not go after them.* LITV. The word “Christ” or “Messiah” isn’t in the text. This is a statement of who the true Christ is, the “I am”, Jehovah, and we are warned about the people that will lead us away, lead us to wander away from the truth.

The Lord is warning us of falsehood, false hopes, lies, rumours, what we call today “fake news”, all put out by a new expert, claiming to have special knowledge, so that they seem as God or take on His mantle. Sometimes the expert goes by the name of antichrist, *1Jn 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there **many antichrists**; whereby we know that it is the last time. 1Jn 2:19 **They went out from us, but they were not of us;** for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, **that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.***

We notice some things about the antichrist. He is more than one, “many”, and because of that we know that it is the last time, literally the last hour. “Antichrist” was a member of a congregation that believed in Christ but he is a failed believer. They went out or perhaps were put out, because they were not like the believers. Later, John says, *2Jn 1:7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.* Does this mean at Jesus’ incarnation, at His resurrection or both? Well it is both. What the antichrist is trying to do is mislead through apparent knowledge, and they are like the Gnostics.

Many of the false Christ's aim to undermine the true doctrine of Christ, *2Jn 1:9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not **in the doctrine of Christ**, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 2Jn 1:10 **If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine**, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: if you want to find out the "doctrine of Christ" then you should read the opening chapters of Hebrews, *Heb 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of **the doctrine of Christ**, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.* The early chapters go into it and from chapter 6 on we look in more detail at the work of the Messianic Priesthood.*

We are often in awe of "experts", we presume that they know more than we do, and we elevate them to a position of authority. It is easy to see how we can be deceived. The Sadducees were religious experts, but probe too much and you would find that they had a nasty side. The early disciples fell foul of them, *Act 5:17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) **and were filled with indignation, Act 5:18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.***

Peter's impassioned speech led them to want to kill him, *Act 5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. Act 5:33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and **took counsel to slay them.*** But there was a wise Jew present whose counsel held sway, Gamaliel, *Act 5:35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. Act 5:36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. Act 5:37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. Act 5:38 **And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: Act 5:39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.*** The word and works of God will stand despite men.

I have mentioned Occam's razor, a philosophical tool that says the simplest explanation is the most likely. Hitchens Razor (Christopher Hitchens) is another philosophical tool and is all about the burden of proof (or lack thereof) on the recipient of an unsubstantiated claim. Hitchens's razor is an epistemological razor, a thinking device if you will, that serves as a general rule for rejecting

certain knowledge claims. It states "what can be asserted without evidence can also be dismissed without evidence" and that leads to an end of opinions not based on data. You may say to those opinionated people, "I think that's a really interesting point you make, what data has led you to believe that?"

And so it is with all those opinionated people who say things that Christ did not say, as if they were true. These people become the "I am" of Biblical knowledge, pontificating upon things which they have no knowledge. Let me give some examples. Despite the Lord Jesus saying it is not for us to know the times and seasons, men go on speculating about the future of Israel, *Act 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time **restore again the kingdom to Israel?** Act 1:7 And he said unto them, **It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.** Act 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Many say Israel will be restored to its former glory as a nation but Jesus gives no hint of that, so where do these people get their knowledge from? The disciples that asked the question realised that Israel was no longer a kingdom and as Jews they asked, "will it be restored" and the reply is I am not telling you. Is that not enough for us to stop speculating? These disciples still have the Jewish mindset, the legal framework, for example, *Act 15:4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. Act 15:5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees **which believed**, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. Act 15:6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.*

When they are told of the destruction of the Temple, *Luk 21:6 As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down*, there is no word from the Master that it is to rebuilt or that it ever will be rebuilt in stone, and yet the "gods" of knowledge say that it will be rebuilt. It will be rebuilt in that city in which was destroyed, yet no command to that effect is given by Jesus, and no mention of an earthly city is given, *Gal 4:23 But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise. Gal 4:24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. Gal 4:25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. Gal 4:26 **But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.***

So the message is, right at the start of the Apocalypse, the uncovering of the work of Christ, leading up to His second coming, that we should keep strictly to the path that we have been given by Him, and walk in it. Where we are not given scriptures to guide us, then we dismiss the speculation of men, and please remember, **"what can be asserted without evidence can also be dismissed without evidence"**. We have nothing to fear if God has not told us things, and having holes in our knowledge is alright, but we should not plug the hole with speculation.

We must hold the Word of Christ above everything. When Christ speaks about History, about Science, about Cosmology, about Creation, about Nature, about how this world functions, about sin, about death, then the believer has to bend under His guidance or else he is becoming "I am", another god, taking from Christ His glory. We may not understand these things, but I can assure you, that neither do the so called "experts" in those fields, *1Co 3:18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. 1Co 3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. 1Co 3:20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.*

The believer must become as a little child, *Mat 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Mat 18:4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

Christ could reveal it to us all in an instant, could give man the answers to so many of his questions, settle all debate by irrefutable proofs, so why doesn't He? I think that it is to test us whether we will follow Him or not, *Deu 8:2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. Deu 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.*

It is no use relying on men to feed you week after week. What are you learning for yourselves? Are you finding Christ for yourself or are you finding Him, through another man's study, through another man's eyes. Taking it as true, because you are trusting of man or too lazy of self, and not going to the word of Christ

directly. You will either live with God's words or else die with your own version of His words.

Jesus says don't worry prematurely a lot must happen first, *Luk 21:8 And he said, Take heed that ye **be not deceived**: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. Luk 21:9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; **but the end is not by and by.***

182. Wars Luke 21: 10 - 11

Luk 21:10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: Luk 21:11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

Having dismissed the destruction of the Temple in a matter of a few words and without tears, Jesus goes on to describe another phenomenon which will act as a sign of the times. It is surprising that according to evolutionists, man has been around so long, yet it is but a blip on his clock of life, in which he has just gathered the dogs of war together and cried, 'Havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war" and that this occurred only in the last 4000 years. Really, billions of years evolving and yet he has not been fighting until very recently. Something wrong in his timescale.

But this is God's world, made by Him, for Him, *Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: Col 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all things were created by him, and for him**: Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* You must let this thought sink down in your minds. It is not a meaningless universe or a mechanistic universe which goes ticking on its own, but a dynamic universe, acting according to the will of Him who made it.

Never divorce these events from your God, as if the wars are nothing to do with Him and He cannot control what happens, that the wars are totally the outcome of sin and God never intervenes. God very much has His hand on the tiller. The king of Syria, Ben Hadad had come up against Samaria and besieged it but the Lord scared them away with confusion of mind, *2Ki 7:6 For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath*

hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. 2Ki 7:7 Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life.

In Hezekiah's day, Isaiah the prophet told the king that the Lord had heard his complaint against Sennacherib the king of Assyria and He would destroy his army, *2Ki 19:33 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. 2Ki 19:34 For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. **2Ki 19:35** And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. 2Ki 19:36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.*

The Lord fights for His people and although we do not see all the battles as having an outcome favouring the people of God, none the less, *Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* One of the great controlling providences that He uses to govern the earth, is what are called "the four horsemen of the apocalypse". They appear in the OT, in Zechariah, about 500 BC at the time of Darius, long after the fall of Jerusalem. The horsemen had been going through the earth long before this time but it is the first time that they are revealed. The message to Israel is "our God reigns". They are described thus,

*Rev 6:2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth **conquering, and to conquer**.....And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon **to take peace from the earth**, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword..... And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat **on him had a pair of balances in his hand**. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine..... And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him **was Death, and Hell followed with him**. And **power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.***

I described them when we did a series on Revelation, between the years 1984 and 1987, p. 38, and I stick by what I said, with perhaps a few additions,

The four horsemen. These four horsemen of Revelation (the proverbial "four horsemen of the Apocalypse") are familiar figures from the O.T. and so there is nothing to indicate that they are released into creation in the last days. They already existed, *Zec 1:8 I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white. Zec 1:9 Then said I, O my lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these be. Zec 1:10 And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, **These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.** Zec 1:11 And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, **We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.***

In Zechariah (chapter 6 v 1 -8) they are hitched to chariots and they are called the four spirits or winds of heaven which blow over the whole earth, *Zec 6:5 And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth,* and as such they satisfy the angel of God although they are not always present in the same location at the same time. To what extent the Saints of the O.T. understood their purpose is not made clear.

The horsemen are spiritual forces, aspects of Christ's governing of this planet. There are four main areas in which God focuses, to bring the world to His presence, to feel His hand, and to cry out for Him. There is Christ, who goes out to conquer mankind, to fight the principalities and powers of darkness, to bring every thought captive. There is the red horseman, symbolising war, nation rising against nation, the result of man's lust and greed, *Jas 4:1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Jas 4:2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Jas 4:3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

There is the black horseman, who governs the supply chain, the bread and wine which we rely upon, the corn and the barley, the staff of life and all things pertaining to it. Nothing is guaranteed for us mortals except we are found in Him, *Deu 28:1 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: Deu 28:2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and*

overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. Deu 28:3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

And finally there is the grey or grisled horse that symbolises death with the grave, hell, following him. *Rev 6:8 And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.* The four bring judgement to the world.

The white horse. In Revelation, we view them in more detail. The white horse, we saw in Zechariah, followed the black horse. The white horse also appears in Revelation, *Rev 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war, and as such is the steed of Christ, who subdues the nations by His word.* The colour white is indicative of righteousness.

The red horse. Red is the colour associated with sin however, it may also symbolise the bloodshed of war *Isa 63:1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Isa 63:2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? Isa 63:3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.*

The horseman functions by taking peace from the earth. We often think of war as a means of establishing peace, but we would be wrong, war is the condition of the breakdown, or breaking down of peace. Peace is the condition in which men are brought into a righteous equilibrium with God and it is spiritual rather than temporal in origin. The absolute cause of peace is "the blood of the cross", *Col 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.* We can now see, therefore that peace comes not through war, but by reconciliation with God, "please God" and you will be at peace. If this red horse takes up peace from the earth, we may infer that it is because men ceased to obey God. In their own eyes men are fighting for their own form of peace, but not that which passes all understanding.

The black horse. Black is the colour associated with spiritual ignorance *Psa 107:10 Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of*

death, being bound in affliction and iron; Psa 107:11 Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:, but also we note with health. Black hairs in a sore indicated in some way, growing healthy tissue (Lev 13 v 31 -37). In Song of Songs (5 v 11) it is the colour of a beautiful head of hair. What then applies to this horse? In the riders hand is a yoke, which could signify a balance. The same word is used in the LXX (Septuagint Greek translation of the O.T.) in Proverbs (16 v 11) to indicate justice, and a false balance is not good (Prov 20 v 23). Ezekiel uses similar terms (chapter 45 v 9 -11 LXX version) as John in Revelation.

From the midst of the throne a voice comes (Rev 6 v 6) calling the measures, confirming the use of yoke in the sense of a balance for transactions. It has also been suggested that the rates of exchange are famine rations. A glance at 2 Kings (7 v 1) would suggest differently. In the midst of a famine, God had provided for His people, "hurt not the oil and the wine", that is, do not injure the trees which support life! This is a promise in the Psalms (33 v 18 -19) and was clearly seen in Exodus. It throws a strange light over the Marxist view of economics that we discussed last time! The view that the black horse bodes well for the people of God and is not a sign of famine is backed up by the vision of the final horseman who does have famine as his weapon.

The pale horse. The black horse might therefore teach us that God maintains the health of His people (Acts 11 v 27), while the pale (Χλωρος Chloros = green, whence 'chlorine') rider that follows brings death in a more general form. His sword (Ρομφαία Romphaia cf Rev 19 v 15), is the broad sword as opposed to the short sword (μαχαίρα Makaira cf Rev 6 v 4) symbolises justice rather than war. If I were to make a distinction between the red and the pale horse, it would be that death brought about by the red horse centres upon the attitude of the people to God Himself. Death by the pale horse is brought about by the attitude of the people to the law of God (see Deut 28 v 15).

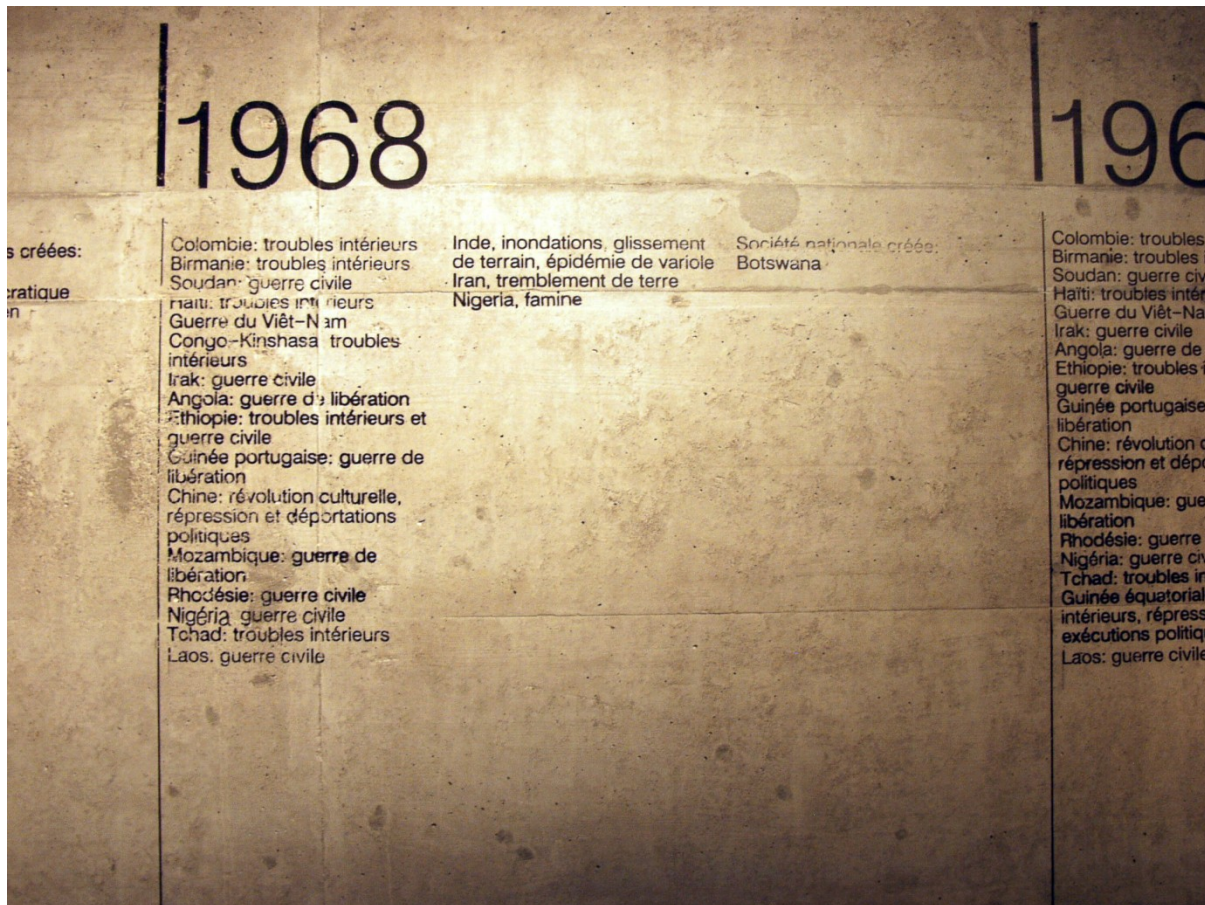
There is a principle of death at work in society which operates in every sphere (the sword in the moral/historical sphere, famine in the economic/biological sphere, beasts in the moral/biological sphere). Death as such is not irrational, purposeless or meaningless. When we are confronted with death we do not always have the specific reason for its appearance. We often quite clearly see the effect, but relating the effect to the reason is not so easy. For David the reason was clear 2Sa 24:12 Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. The causes had varying durations and intensities, but the final outcome was the

same. Death! This story teaches us that we may suffer because of our leaders, so it is important to exercise constraints upon those who would rule over us, rather than let them get on with it (1 Tim 2 v 1 ff). Prayer implies that we also have some accompanying actions to perform, for we do not just pray for bread and stay at home. Christians can be "politically" active.

Summary: The four horsemen follow the pattern of tribulation laid down in Matthew (24 v 6 ff). Christianity will not see a quiet victory in a sinful world, for it will be as violent as it is relentless, more so as the end is approached because satan is well aware of the time he has left (Rev 12 v 10 -11). He knows he has a short time. The comfort for us lies in the fact that the horsemen are our allies in the great victory coming over the Universe. They fight with us and so we have nothing to fear from them.

Now why does not Jesus say what I have said in the same words, why is He speaking in those guarded terms? Well He does speak in those words, but with not such a drawn out way as I have done, and He says it, *Luk 21:10 Then said he unto them, **Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: Luk 21:11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.***

In Geneva, at the Red Cross museum, there is a long, stark concrete wall, and on the wall are written all the conflicts, famines, earthquakes, going back through the centuries. I wonder what those Jews would have thought if they had known that millions and millions of souls would perish through war, famine, and disease because of human ambition?



183. Persecution *Luke 21: 12 - 15*

Luk 21:12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. Luk 21:13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Luk 21:14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: Luk 21:15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

This may be said to the Jews of the time and to Christians down the centuries, as persecution raises its head. If you are a Christian, then it is one of the realities of your life as you bear testimony to Christ. It is no use thinking there is nothing going to happen to you if you are not a Christian because there is, and you get an everlasting judgement.

Most people in the West would be surprised by the answer to the question: who are the most persecuted people in the world? According to the International Society for Human Rights, a secular group with members in 38 states worldwide, 80 per cent of all acts of religious discrimination in the world today are directed at Christians.

Christianity Is the World's Most Persecuted Religion, and this is confirmed by a new report. Every year Open Doors USA releases its World Watch report of the 50 states most likely to punish Christians for their faith. Last year 11 nations were guilty of "extreme persecution", with North Korea top of that list. The group Open Doors USA figures that 360 million Christians last year lived in countries where persecution was "significant." Roughly 5,600 Christians were murdered, more than 6,000 were detained or imprisoned, and another 4,000-plus were kidnapped. In addition, more than 5,000 churches and other religious facilities were destroyed.

The Centre for the Study of Global Christianity in the United States estimates that even more, 100,000 Christians, now die every year, targeted because of their faith, that is 11 every hour. The Pew Research Centre says that hostility to religion reached a new high in 2012, when Christians faced some form of discrimination in 139 countries, almost three-quarters of the world's nations.

Jesus, a man who never advocated violence for His disciples, but to the contrary told them to avoid it, for violence only escalates violence, gives us no reason to persecute anyone. He said, *Mat 5:38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: Mat 5:39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.* That is the Christian response to violence against your person.

If you are the slightest bit angry with your brother, a fellow Jew or Christian, you will be in danger of the judgement and hell fire, *Mat 5:21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: Mat 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

As a Christian in employment, you always avoid using your position for gain, *Luk 3:14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.* We endeavour to keep the peace.

When someone sins against you, you only have redress in the church, and that involves a verbal decision not a physical punishment, *Mat 18:15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. Mat 18:16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. Mat 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*

The Christian is the epitome of kindness, *Col 3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Col 3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

If anyone says they are a Christian and is offensive, unkind, violent, they are liars and will not get into the kingdom of heaven, *Gal 5:19 People's desires make them give in to immoral ways, filthy thoughts, and shameful deeds. Gal 5:20 They worship idols, practice witchcraft, hate others, and are hard to get along with. People become jealous, angry, and selfish. They not only argue and cause trouble, but they are Gal 5:21 envious. They get drunk, carry on at wild parties, and do other evil things as well. I told you before, and I am telling you again: **No one who does these things will share in the blessings of God's kingdom.** CEV.*

The Christian has nothing in his nature that fits him for persecution, so why does persecution occur and what is the cause of persecution? It goes back to the beginning of time, *1Jn 3:11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 1Jn 3:12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. 1Jn 3:13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*

It goes back to Cain, who was "of that wicked one, and slew his brother". He was of satan, the seed of the devil, right at that early stage of human development. We do not know how he came to be the devil's son, but clearly he was and perhaps the devil got to him just as he got to his mother Eve. Perhaps the promises that the devil made, the world view that he conjured up, was more appealing than God's vision of a now fallen world.

The sin of Cain was of the second generation sinner, *1Jn 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. **For this purpose***

the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. *1Jn 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 1Jn 3:10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.* But there was a deliverer and an adversary, “*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested*”, a deliverer to those who changed, an adversary to those who do not change.

Now this answers one more question that causes debate, namely the reason why Cain’s offering was rejected. I think that it was rejected because he offered it not to God but to the devil. The Bible says, *Gen 4:3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. Gen 4:4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: Gen 4:5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.* And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. He may have brought it to God but his heart was far from God, and it wasn’t God’s required offering, and that leaves one other subject that he was offering to, namely satan.

God said to Cain, *Gen 4:7 Is there not, if you do well, acceptance? And if you do not do well, sin [or a sin-offering] is lying at the opening, and its [or His] desire is for you, and you rule over it [or by Him].*” LSV. Because God speaks to Cain does not mean that Cain is a believer, any more than God speaking to Eve suggested she was a believer. God did try to correct the path Cain was on, but to no avail.

The song of Moses, spoken to Israel before he is taken, reminds Israel of its progressive bad behaviour, *Deu 32:16 They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. Deu 32:17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. Deu 32:18 Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. Deu 32:19 And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters.*

There is in this world and beyond a battle between good and evil, light and dark, *Eph 6:12 We are not fighting against humans. We are fighting against forces and authorities and against rulers of darkness and powers in the spiritual world.* CEV. It extends to unseen realms but it had started on earth as a sacrifice conducted by two brothers, who served different G/gods. One had served the Creator and one had served satan.

It is a **Universal Law** that follows all men, *"Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you."* Christ is not hated because He did good, He is hated because of the works of unrighteous men are shown up in glaring contrast, and they get angry, and like Cain, they will kill Abel, and they will persecute you. God has divided between light and dark, and as dark flees from light, so the sons of satan flee the Sons of Light, and if they cannot flee, cornered like a rat, they will persecute us.

It's not very pretty what they will do to us, *Luk 21:12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. Luk 21:13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Luk 21:14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: Luk 21:15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.*

I can illustrate it best from an example in the NT, Steven, *Act 6:8 God gave Stephen the power to work great miracles and wonders among the people. Act 6:9 But some Jews from Cyrene and Alexandria were members of a group who called themselves "Free Men." They started arguing with Stephen. Some others from Cilicia and Asia also argued with him. Act 6:10 But they were no match for Stephen, who spoke with the great wisdom that the Spirit gave him. Act 6:11 **So they talked some men into saying, "We heard Stephen say terrible things against Moses and God!"** Act 6:12 They turned the people and their leaders and the teachers of the Law of Moses against Stephen. Then they all grabbed Stephen and dragged him in front of the council. Act 6:13 Some men agreed to tell lies about Stephen, and they said, "This man keeps on saying terrible things about this holy temple and the Law of Moses. Act 6:14 **We have heard him claim that Jesus from Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses gave us."** Act 6:15 Then all the council members stared at Stephen. They saw that his face looked like the face of an angel. CEV.*

The men could find no grounds in truth to disagree with Steven. What Stephen said was right, but because it undermined these Jews, they resorted to lies and false witnesses. The Gospel that Steven preached did not exactly say *"that Jesus from Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses gave us"*, you could have thought he did if you listened quickly, but if you thought about it, he did not say this. Steven gets his day in court, and to be fair his witness statement is said without interruption, *Act 7:1 The high priest asked Stephen, "Are they telling the truth about you?"* CEV.

Steven gives one of the most comprehensive and most succinct histories of Israel ever given. He starts with Abraham and goes right through to Solomon, and shows that the people always resisted the spirit of God. Moses, there adored Moses, was likewise resisted, *Act 7:35 This was the same Moses that the people rejected by saying, "Who made you our leader and judge?" God's angel had spoken to Moses from the bush. And God had even sent the angel to help Moses rescue the people and be their leader.* This Moses who they revered had been resisted by them, so who were they to poke the finger at Steven, saying that he was teaching that Jesus would "**change the customs that Moses gave us**", when they did just that.

And as for saying that Jesus would "**destroy this place**", what was so special about it? God had lived in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple as a concession to Solomon, but did not the people realise that God did not live in man made dwellings? *Act 7:48 But **the Most High God doesn't live in houses made by humans**. It is just as the prophet said, when he spoke for the Lord, Act 7:49 "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? In what place will I rest? Act 7:50 **I have made everything**."* The Temple did not need destroying, it never was in reality God's home, only a token of His presence.

The anger of the people is roused further by his statements and it leads to his execution, which incidentally, Paul is a party. This shows the sort of persecution that we can expect.

184. Hated But Not Forsaken Luke 21: 16 - 19

Luk 21:16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. Luk 21:17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. Luk 21:18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish. Luk 21:19 In your patience possess ye your souls.

Picking up where we left off, we sum up the nature and origin of Christian persecution. There was nothing in Christ to hate, and true Christianity requires a man to be kind and loving, and there is nothing in him which can cause offence except Christ in him. I remember a dear brother who used to go out preaching with a banner, and he said to me, "if my shoes are clean, my suit pressed, my hair tidy, then the only thing that can cause offence are the word spoken by Christ". From the first humans, there has been a division between those who serve God and those who serve the devil, and that explains the continual conflict.

There is a resulting Universal Law of the sons of darkness persecuting the Sons of Light. Steven showed how he destroyed the teaching of the Jews by just being honest with Scripture and as a result angering them.

Do not think that anyone is your friend who is not a Christian, and even then be careful of who you trust, *Luk 21:16 And ye shall be betrayed* (Lit. "given up") *both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends*. This is so important a saying that it is recorded in Matthew and Marks Gospel, *Mat 10:21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. Mat 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved..... Mar 13:12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. Mar 13:13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: **but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.***

You think that the members of your family, standing before you are harmless and that they would not betray you. Think again for Jesus says they will, and when the conflict is hot, when you mention Christ, their loyalty to satan is shown over their loyalty to you and Christ. You think that the social occasions, when you host for family are neutral ground and that you can be unequally yoked to them on that occasion, no you cannot. Fool, for that is just the opportunity that satan desires to triumph over you. Some of you Christians think that you can fight the devil on your own and that might be true, but if you have brethren, why on earth don't you get them to come and fight the good fight with you. If your families do not like the Christian company you bring, it shows you where they stand.

How can this be, a friend or family member betraying you? If you stand on the rock of Christ, stand for Christ, and do not put up with the evil things that they do, you will see their true colours. Because they stand in the shadow of satan, and because he directs their evil lives, they will rise against you, *Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Eph 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

We once had much in our lives to do with satan and nothing at all to do with Jesus, and we hated Jesus and all that He said about us, *Rom 5:10 **For if, when we were enemies,** we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* We would betray Christ and

His people, rather than give up our father the devil, and there is no doubt that we were enemies. There are examples in Scripture of betrayal, and this one had consequences for all parties, *Gen 37:4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. Gen 37:5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.* Joseph was if you will, a type of Christ in the OT, and his betrayers were the sons of Jacob, the nation of Israel, and Joseph became the deliverer of Israel having forgiven them their crimes against him, *Gen 50:19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? Gen 50:20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Gen 50:21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.* Joseph answered their hatred with love.

Clearly there are situations and occasions when all those close to you will turn against you, and you have been forewarned by Jesus, but He will be a friend who will never leave you. Yet there is even worse than betrayal, for some of us will suffer death, *“and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.”*

The price of following Christ is to become an outcaste, *Luk 21:17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.* Now where does the cheery old evangelist tell you that bit of bad news when he is calling you to Christ? Sure, he will put the frighteners on you, as an unbeliever, and tell you that you are hell bound if you do not receive Christ as your personal Saviour, but if you do receive Christ what he tells you is it will all go away. The Gospel, the good news, does not contain “good news” without qualification. The Gospel is also the news that you will be hated by family and friends, be betrayed by those you thought were close to you, you will be hated by men, unpopular, and put to death for your faith.

If you thought that you could be the best loved person in the world, you are not living the faith. If you thought that you could maintain good relationships with your unbelieving relatives, with the unfruitful works of darkness, then you should think again, for it is likely that you are not a Christian and you are compromised. And that is the position that many of us find ourselves in.

Christianity brings with it sorrow and that is par for the course. Is that Good News? Yes it is, because it is a blessing to you, *Mat 5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Mat 5:11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Mat 5:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the*

prophets which were before you. But that is not told to you by the cheery evangelist, who has somehow forgotten the downside, and he only tells you of the upside, the happy side of the new life.

We should be true to the Master and tell the whole story or we are doing Him a disservice. To tell people that all their worries are over and all their needs will be met, to say that they will be healed and suffer no illness, to say that they will not suffer poverty or hardship, is not true for many of the believers, especially the persecuted believers. The real world in which the Christian lives is different from the world of the evangelist. But then, if you trust to their words and not to Jesus words, what can you expect.

Having said that some of them shall be put to death, the Lord makes a remarkable statement, *Luk 21:18 **And yet not a single hair on your head will perish***, or be destroyed. He tells us we, or at least, some of us, will die, but that our hairs on our heads will not be destroyed. They will survive our demise. This leads us to consider the very nature of our life and that it is expendable but that it is at the same time preserved. After death, our hair, if ever we had any, would be preserved. I would suggest it further extends to non-martyred believers, they too would have their hair restored in the resurrection of the dead. And if God is concerned to save the hair, I think that He will preserve the more important parts of us.

How does He do it? *Psa 139:15 My bones were not hidden from You when I was made in secret; when I was woven in the depths of the earth. Psa 139:16 Your eyes saw my embryo; and in Your book all my members were written the days they were formed, and not one was yet among them. Psa 139:17 And how precious are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!* LITV.

From a child in the womb, God knew us, and He cares for us right from that secret beginning, from conception, and we too have a duty of care for the unborn as well as the born. The woman who says her rights outweigh the rights of the unborn child in her womb, is failing to see that God sees two lives before Him, and they are both important to Him. The mother and the unborn child are equally important, and the Christian view that, *Joh 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*, shows the love of the mother for her unborn child, in doing all that she can to preserve it.

The unborn is a miracle of God's engineering, and the mother is just a carrier of the new life. The life is something made by God, and to destroy it is a crime against God. It was a wonder to David, how he was made, it seemed so complicated to him, but how would he have marvelled at what we know today of

life, and how much more will future generations marvel? Charles Spurgeon in the 1800's noted, "The Psalmist had scarcely peered within the veil which hides the nerves, sinews, and blood-vessels from common inspection; the science of anatomy was quite unknown to him; and yet he had seen enough to arouse his admiration of the work and his reverence for the Worker."

John Trapp had some very enlightened thoughts on the phrase "***My bones were not hidden from You when I was made in secret***", "Aquinas saith that at the resurrection the bodies of the saints shall be so clear and transparent that all the veins, humours, nerves, and bowels shall be seen, as in a glass. It is sure that they are so to God when first formed in the womb."

God must see us differently than we see ourselves, because He created every part and knows how it works, *Heb 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.* We are, so to speak no different than those transparent creatures that inhabit the sea, which you can see right through, see their heart, intestines and their brains, see all their parts. He sees us as jelly fish, transparent.

That is weird but comforting, in that He knows me intimately, from the womb, at each stage of my development right through to that time when I shall transition to glory. That is possible, not only because He has a memory that we cannot conceive of, but He has made each of us with a programme that defines what we shall become, DNA. We carry the record of our being within us, how we are put together, in what order, colour, shape, height, weight and the hair upon our heads, and all of this without a thought from us, *Luk 12:25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? Luk 12:26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?*

But the hairs on our heads are numbered, every one of them, every colour of them, the length of them, and neither they nor any part of us will perish. You may think that you escape the judgement if you are cremated, scattered as dust to the four winds, but God can raise you perfectly, because He has your formulae, the make up of your molecules, the very programme of your DNA. You cannot do a thing to escape the final reckoning, and you will be raised from the dead, the good and the bad, and you will bow the knee to Christ.

There is no enemy who can defeat a believer, wipe out his name from off of the face of the earth, and remove every vestige of his once having trodden this earth. God will bring him back, *1Th 4:14* We believe that Jesus died and was raised to life. We also believe that when God brings Jesus back again, he will

bring with him all who had faith in Jesus before they died. *1Th 4:15 Our Lord Jesus told us that when he comes, **we won't go up to meet him ahead of his followers who have already died.** 1Th 4:16 With a loud command and with the shout of the chief angel and a blast of God's trumpet, the Lord will return from heaven. Then those who had faith in Christ before they died will be raised to life. 1Th 4:17 Next, all of us who are still alive will be taken up into the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the sky. From that time on we will all be with the Lord forever. 1Th 4:18 **Encourage each other with these words.** CEV.*

Whatever your opinion of the “how”, “when”, “where” of the second coming, you all must find these words of great encouragement, and you are in turn to encourage one another with these words. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Because Jesus is telling the truth, and the events will unfold exactly as He has said we have confidence that the future events will occur as He says.

I imagine the disciples had no idea of how God knew the number of all of our individual hairs, and they did not have to know. God just gets bigger and more amazing with every advance in our knowledge and it seems as if He moves away from us with every step we advance to define Him, *Psa 139:5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Psa 139:6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Psa 139:7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*

1Jn 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

185. The Fall of Jerusalem *Luke 21: 20 - 24*

Luk 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Luk 21:21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. Luk 21:22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. Luk 21:23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. Luk 21:24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

This is the second time Jerusalem is headed for a fall, from which she will not recover. The first fall occurred when Zedekiah was king, in about 590 BC, *2Ki 25:7 And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon. 2Ki 25:8 And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: 2Ki 25:9 **And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. 2Ki 25:10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.***

Paul states in Galatians, that the earthly Jerusalem is not free from servitude to sin, but Jerusalem above is free, *Gal 4:24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. Gal 4:25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to **Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.** Gal 4:26 **But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*** This is written about 50 AD, 20 years before Jerusalem's destruction, so Paul is talking about the old earthly institution, the city and all that it stood for, as being a symbol of bondage.

Little comment is made about the city of Jerusalem and its status spiritually, by the writers of the NT, or about its approaching demise, except perhaps for these verses in Galatians, and certainly nothing is ever said about rebuilding Jerusalem. Yet despite this lack of scriptural evidence, some evangelicals believe that Jerusalem on earth will rise again, like this teaching from the **Spirit of Grace Ministries**,

Does Jerusalem have relevance to Gentile Christians today? It very much does. Firstly **a Jewish Jerusalem is a fulfilment of prophecy** and the most significant "sign of the times" we have which indicates that the return of Jesus is imminent. In the gospel of Luke Jesus tells us: "And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). In AD 70 Rome destroyed much of Jerusalem, levelled the temple, and drove the Jews far from their beloved city. Century after century passed and the holy city was controlled by Gentiles of various nations. **During the Six Day War in 1967 the Jews recaptured their beloved city**, took it from the hands of the Jordanians, and for the first time in nearly 2,000 years Jerusalem was no longer "trampled by Gentiles." **If this doesn't mark the beginning of the end of this age, what else would?** In

addition to this Jesus spoke a prophetic word for the city of Jerusalem. He condemned the city for killing the prophets and rejecting their Messiah (Himself), and then declared: "Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' " This simple statement contains incredible prophetic insights, not the least of which is the fact that at the second coming of Christ **there will be a Jewish, repentant population in Jerusalem.** It was an absolute prophetic **necessity for Jerusalem to become a Jewish city, and in our generation it certainly has.** The repentance has not yet occurred, but it surely will, probably after the church is raptured.

I have highlighted the statements that require a closer look to see whether or not they are part of Jesus story and you can do this at your leisure. Yes, this does contain some incredible prophetic insights, all of which have **NOT** been gleaned from Christ, but have been made by interpreting the events occurring in the world, from a particular point of view. If you stick with Christ's word, you cannot possibly extrapolate it into this fantasy world. All we know is that Jerusalem below, wherever it exists, is in bondage and Jerusalem above is free, "**which is the mother of us all.**"

But more important to the disciples of Jesus day was, "when is it going to happen and is it possible to escape?" The first thing that they would see were armies surrounding Jerusalem and that would be a sign that desolation was nigh. Yes, this had happened before and there was a graphic description of it, a sort of déjà vu.

*2Ki 25:1 And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, **he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it;** and they built forts against it round about. 2Ki 25:2 And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. 2Ki 25:3 And on the ninth day of the fourth month the **famine prevailed** in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. 2Ki 25:4 And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain. 2Ki 25:5 And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him. 2Ki 25:6 So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him.....2Ch 36:17 Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with*

*the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand. 2Ch 36:18 And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. 2Ch 36:19 And they burnt the house of God, and **brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.** 2Ch 36:20 And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:*

The disciples are told exactly what to do when they see the armies surrounding Jerusalem, namely get out of the land immediately, *Luk 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Luk 21:21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.* It was not dissimilar to the Jews in Germany, when the Nazis took power, some recognised it for what it was, others left it too late.

When in 1933 the National Socialists assumed power, 525,000 Jews – less than one per cent of Germany's population – experienced the termination of their German-Jewish *Lebensgemeinschaft* (co-existence). They found themselves at the mercy of a popular dictatorship which offered them a choice between social segregation within a new racial state or expulsion from Germany. They discussed at length the alternatives of home and exile, whether to stay or to leave. A minority left at once: those in danger for political reasons, Communists, Socialists and other Anti-Fascists, Zionists and individuals driven out of their professions. 38,000 Jews sought refuge in exile in 1933; 23,000 in 1934; 20,000 in 1935.

The majority decided to stay. They believed that the Nazi regime might not remain in power for very long; an illusion also shared by many non-Jews at the time. The belief that a rapid return to democracy would restore the German-Jewish co-existence deterred many from leaving Germany and rebuilding their lives in other countries.

It ultimately took a direct threat to their lives to make most German Jews realise that their ties to Germany were no longer a safety blanket. This occurred in November 1938, with the pogrom of *Kristallnacht* – the Night of Broken Glass. After this event discussion over whether to leave or stay turned to the urgent, panicked cry: "Get out, at all costs!"

By the autumn of 1941 almost 300,000 German Jews had escaped Nazi terror; two thirds of the Jewish population of 1933. There were still 164,000 Jews trapped in Germany; most of whom still intended to leave and were desperately waiting for the arrival of life-saving landing permits and visas. Thousands of applications lay unprocessed on desks in London, Washington and other cities of the “free world” that had already closed their doors to Jewish immigrants.

The Jews in Germany were not warned but the Christians of Palestine were warned and by all accounts they heeded the warning, and in Eusebius, Church History 3, 5, 3, it says,

The people of the Church in Jerusalem were commanded by an oracle given by revelation before the war to those in the city who were worthy of it to depart and dwell in one of the cities of Perea which they called Pella. To it those who believed on Christ travelled from Jerusalem, so that when holy men had altogether deserted the royal capital of the Jews and the whole land of Judaea..."



It seems to me, quite reasonable that the early Christians would have started to evacuate the city of Jerusalem when Jesus first gave the warning, 40 years before rather than wait until the last minute to evacuate. They would have established a different home, anticipating the fall of Jerusalem, and Pella would have been a thriving city, in the fertile valley of the Jordan. The Christians did escape the fall of Jerusalem.

But for the stubborn Jews who rejected the Messiah, refused to believe His words, there remained “vengeance”, *Luk 21:22* ***For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.*** The days of vengeance or retribution for what? The vengeance for not having believed in

Christ, *Isa 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; Isa 61:2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and **the day of vengeance** of our God; to comfort all that mourn; Isa 61:3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.*

You will note that when Jesus quotes this passage from the scroll of Isaiah, in Luke chapter 4, He stopped just before mentioning “vengeance”, *Luk 4:19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Luk 4:20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.* It does not mean that the second part of the Isaiah verse is left out of scripture just that our Lord did not quote it. Why didn’t Jesus quote the whole chapter and not just part of it? Well, He quotes sufficient enough to make the point that He wanted at the time, the rest is left to quote another time.

It is the **Gospel of the Jubilee**, it is freedom to the lost and injured, but it only deals with one part of the problem, the deliverance of the captives, but what about the causes of sin and the people who commit sin? That is where the “day of vengeance of our God comes to the fore. It is the settling of scores, for all of the years that the Temple has been misused, for all of the sin, for killing God’s Messiah. Retribution on the Jews, at that time, and retribution on all who are ungodly, *Rom 2:7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: Rom 2:8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Rom 2:9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;* It is also an example of the Final Judgement.

The warning that closes this section must be for people who do not act upon the word, only hold it as moral truth, with no practical value, *Luk 21:23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. Luk 21:24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

If you obey Christ and flee, why should you be caught up in the turmoil? I think He says this as a severe health warning, because it is going to get messy, get brutal, if you stay in Jerusalem.

Now this verses containing “times of the Gentiles” needs some clarification. It is better translated, *Luk 21:24 and they shall fall by the mouth of the sword, and shall be led captive to all **the nations**, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by nations, **till the times of nations be fulfilled***. LITV. It is not about the Christians and we must recognise that “Christians” do not yet exist but only Jews. It is saying that those present, namely the Jewish nation, is going to go into captivity, and the city of Jerusalem will be trodden down by the nations, until their time is complete. The nations are not necessarily Christians, but all ethnic groups living on the planet, and they will comprise different religions, such the Arab people who are Muslim, or the Indian people who are Hindu, Sikh, Buddhists, and so on. It is not the Christians versus the Jews, but the Jews who are trodden down by the world.

It says that this will happen “until the time of the nations is fulfilled”, or complete, or until their time comes to an end. This implies that something happens afterwards, but it does not say what, and here I am not going to speculate. There is a scripture in Romans 11 which may or may not shed some light on this, *Rom 11:25 Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. Rom 11:26 **And in this way all Israel will be saved**, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”; Rom 11:27 “and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”* ESV.

This is part of God’s plan to save “all Israel”, which I take to be the Jews of the OT, the Jews who have become Christians by faith in Christ, those from all nations and tongues, Muslims, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhists, and so on, who have become Christians by faith in Christ. Thus all Israel is saved.

I do not think that anyone who has not believed in Jesus as Lord and Saviour will be part of that number. I do not hold that unbelieving Jews of Christ’s day, or any other day, will be given a second chance to repent, *Pro 11:7 When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth*. The rich man who lifted up his eyes in hell, did not get a second chance, indeed, hell would be empty if men saw the horror of it. But these people who Jesus spoke to were told to get out of town, not to sit there debating what will happen to the nation of Israel in a later time.

186. The Coming of The Son of Man *Luke 21: 25- 28*

Luk 21:25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Luk 21:26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. Luk 21:27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Luk 21:28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

We haven't been given any ideas of what the signs "*in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars*" will be, and it is left to our imagination. We love "signs" because they give us a bit of time, or so we think, to get right with God, before the events come to pass. Signs are a sort of early warning to us to get focused on Christ and to amend our ways before we go to judgement, and we hope we will be saved by this strategy.

Obviously, anybody who adopts this strategy is not fully committed. They are reactive to Christ and not proactive. They respond to prodding but are not consciously walking with Him. A consequence of this type of Christianity is that it will lead people to be obsessive with signs but not with sanctification.

I do not think that the really faithful in Jesus, give much thought over what the signs are and they have a "que sera sera", attitude, what will be will be, choosing rather to concentrate on Him.

The signs may cause concern to the nations, but there is nothing you can do to stop them, and to live in a constant state of fear, day by day, is pointless and faithless. The end is coming and no one will avoid it, but you can avoid the everlasting hell, and we should be concentrating on securing our place in heaven, not worrying about the earth. Do the angels fear? I have not found that those angels beholding their Father face, do so in a state of fear. The demons though are another matter, and they do fear, *Mat 8:29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* Seeing that we shall become as the angels, **is it not time to start behaving like them.**

Why did God create the luminaries in space? *Gen 1:14 And God said, Let luminaries be in the expanse of the heavens, to divide between the day and the night. And let **them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years.*** *Gen 1:15 And let them be for luminaries in the expanse of the heavens, to give light on the earth. And it was so.* *Gen 1:16 And God made the two great luminaries: the great luminary to rule the day, and the small luminary and the stars to rule the night.* *Gen 1:17 And God set them in the expanse of the heavens, to give light on the earth,* *Gen 1:18 and **to rule over the day and over the night; and to divide between the light and the darkness.*** *And God saw that it was good.* *Gen 1:19 And there was evening, and there was morning the fourth day.* LITV.

One of their purposes was as signs, and Jesus said that they would be just that, *Mat 24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:.....* *Mar 13:24 But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.* He doesn't say exactly how they would show the sign but that they would.

It could be like Joshua's day, when the Sun and the Moon appeared to stand still, *Jos 10:11 And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.* *Jos 10:12 Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.* *Jos 10:13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.* *Jos 10:14 And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.*

We just do not know how they will show it, and I am not really bothered by the lack of information, but it will really concern some people, *Luk 21:25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth **distress of nations, with perplexity;*** *the sea and the waves roaring;* *Luk 21:26 **Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.***

I was surprised by the number of Christians who had a real fear of the recent Covid pandemic. I had expected Christians, above all people, to be stoic in the face of the disease, but they were divided between the people who were stricken into fear and compliance and those who carried on with their lives regardless. It is not part of my argument that the politicians were two faced liars, or that there were deaths to vulnerable people and that it was a real disease, but that its impact was on the world view of Christians, and it was revealing.

We should not unnecessarily expose others to disease but neither should we be stopped about going about our lawful business. We don't stop people driving because some of us die in road crashes. Life is full of hazards that we have to balance them with our need to get on with life while we are here, *Pro 22:13 Don't be so lazy that you say, "If I go to work, a lion will eat me!"* CEV. To expect earthly governments to take the responsibility of looking after you is foolish in the extreme, since most of them say one thing and do another, and they are too busy taking care of themselves.

A recent programme on North Korea showed the draconian measures that the regime went through to isolate the disease. People were confined to their houses if they caught Covid, and not even allowed out to get food. They were like the lepers in the Bible, forced to starve outside of the City, with death in the City, *2Ki 7:3 And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? 2Ki 7:4 If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.* People were dying of starvation in North Korea because they were not allowed out under that evil totalitarian regime. But what do you expect when their view on life is that there is no God and this life is all there is. The world view of the atheist state is that this is all they have, so they try and safeguard it.

The world is a dangerous place and you only have "today" in it, *Mat 6:34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. **Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*** But you would think that some Christians have a long lease on life, and it is so precious to them that the things of this life outweigh the things of heaven and this life is most important and heaven comes a poor "second" to it. This I think is the thing which I saw dividing Christians during the pandemic, it was on how they saw life, their world view.

We live in an age when news travels fast and so does disease, and this worries some people. This will lead to fear, anxiety and distress, *"and upon the earth*

distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth".

The National Centre for Biotechnology Information stated that one in three adults were living with anxiety disorder during the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide. In the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, global rates of anxiety and depression increased by a massive 25 per cent, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). What brought on this stress and anxiety?

Stress and fear are caused in part by not knowing the outcome of events, but you Christians do know the outcome, and it ends well. Only people who have uncertainty, perhaps because of the way they treated others, will fear, *Gen 32:11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.*

Does fear affect believers? I say no it doesn't or rather it shouldn't if they hold to a Biblical view of life, *Pro 29:25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: **but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.*** We have nothing to fear from men, and for the Christian, he sees things as they truly are, or he should do, *Mat 10:26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. Mat 10:27 What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. Mat 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* God is the one we should fear.

The church at Smyrna was told by Jesus' messenger, to fear none of the things that would happen to them in this life, *Rev 2:8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; Rev 2:9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Rev 2:10 Fear **none of those things which thou shalt suffer:** behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* Get used to it, we must suffer so let us suffer graciously.

We are here as a body to help one another through the good and the bad times, not to go about cowering in fear, and like the early church, we are a militant body, *Act 4:29 And now, Lord, take notice of the threats they have made, and*

allow us, your servants, to speak your message with all boldness. Act 4:30 *Reach out your hand to heal, and grant that wonders and miracles may be performed through the name of your holy Servant Jesus."* Act 4:31 ***When they finished praying, the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to proclaim God's message with boldness.***

Do you think that they were different people to us? They had the same life needs as us, particularly the need for boldness in witnessing to Christ, but they asked for it. **Do you ask for it?** They didn't hide behind the "one man ministry", the "minister", the person who appears to run and champion the church, and push him to the front while they all cowered behind him. The people in Acts didn't let him take over the "doing" and the "saying" of the church, to become the voice of the people, while they got on with their selfish lives. They were in the battle, all of them together, and they wanted to speak for Jesus, "*allow us, your servants, to speak your message with all boldness*", they all prayed, "***When they finished praying, the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to proclaim God's message with boldness***". Hardly a fearful people in view of what they were facing.

We have let men take our birthright, *Php 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* Everything in religion is done for us, one man ministry, choosing the hymns, prayer, and controlling our religious lives, to the extent that all we contribute to is the collection. If you think that what passes for worship and service today is Biblical, then please, show me where it is in the New Testament, because what we have today looks nothing like it, particularly the character and boldness of Christians.

There are many things that can cause anxiety in life, if we let them, but as we have said, for the Christian they melt like snow on a warm day in the presence of Christ. But if the Jews were anxious about the things coming on earth, they will be terrified about what follows it if they had not listened to Jesus, *Luk 21:27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

What is a terror to one person, brings a smiling hope to another. To the non-believer it means judgement to a believer, deliverance, *Eze 32:32 For I have caused my terror in the land of the living: and he shall be laid in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that are slain with the sword, even Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.* And there is terror to the non-believer, *Luk*

21:26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

But it shall not be a terror to you Christian, for it marks the end of this life and a new beginning. It is something that you will sense if it happens in your day, *Luk 21:28 **And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*** This reminded me of the Psalm which has the same sentiment, *Psa 24:6 This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah. Psa 24:7 **Lift up your heads, O ye gates;** and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Psa 24:8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Psa 24:9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Psa 24:10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.*

Tradition suggests this Psalm is connected to when David brought the Ark of the Covenant back from the home of Obed-edom (2 Samuel 6). The ark that represented God's presence was about to enter Jerusalem. When it had been seized by the Philistines, Eli's daughter-in-law bore a son and called him Ichabod, saying, "'The glory has departed from Israel!' because the ark of God had been captured" (1 Samuel 4:21). Now that the ark was about to enter Jerusalem, the glory of the King of heaven and earth was returning.

Everything that was downcast is now encouraged to let the Lord of Host in to the City of Jerusalem. Jesus leaves the earthly city of Jerusalem and ascends to the heavenly city, Jerusalem above, with lifted heads we welcome the King of Glory.

187. The Lesson of the Fig Tree *Luke 21: 29 - 33*

Luk 21:29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; Luk 21:30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. Luk 21:31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Luk 21:32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Luk 21:33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

This verse, *Luk 21:32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled*, is problematic, and I am not arrogant enough to say that I have a definitive answer to the statement of Jesus, "*Verily I say unto you, this*

generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled". I think that this verse is an important one which causes a number of views of the end time scenarios, all by way of explaining the verse and linking it to other Scriptures. Bearing in mind that there is not a Christian in sight in the time of Jesus, and you, the listener are surrounded by Jews, with just the knowledge that they had, before all of the prophetic invention that has blighted our modern world, before theologians, before experts, you are left to interpret it.

Scriptural proofs though have to be tempered by the truth of where it leads. The Scripture may state an honest fact or truth, but do you have the correct understanding of it, the correct context and the correct outcome? If you are wrong you multiply the error and ignorance of the truth. What are "these things"? *Luk 21:31 So likewise ye, when ye see **these things** come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.* And are "these things" that come to pass all linked to the generation that "*shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled*"? What things have the disciples been told? Here is a test for you,

There will be wars and commotions, nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, great earthquakes, famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute *you*, but I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. You shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and *some* of you shall they cause to be put to death. You shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake but there shall not an hair of your head perish. You shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh and let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter there into, these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

Did you get all of that? If I had asked you to write it down exactly, first time you heard it, would you be able to do it..... in order, on just one hearing? I think that I would have been quite confused. And then come the verses, *Luk 21:27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Luk 21:28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*

What would I have been drawn to concentrate on? I think that I would be mulling over the things which would immediately affect me, the more personal things first. I would have done a risk assessment on the events. I would have been bothered about my family betraying me firstly, I would have thought the invasion by foreign armies came second, I would have thought earthquakes and pestilences come third, and the signs in the heavens came in fourth. It is a lot to taken in, having heard it once, but the events are important to me, **as they relate to me.**

Then from another perspective you can look at the events from their order in time, for example when do the earthquakes occur, and do they occur in parallel with wars, throughout history? Do the wars and catastrophes occur before or after the fall of Jerusalem, and are these events a sign that Jerusalem is going to fall or are they all totally separate from that event? Is it possible to disentangle all these events, especially in those days when news was not reported in the same way as now and if it was reported, it wasn't reported by a news agency? The final event was the coming of Christ, and that date may be far from that time, because it doesn't say.

Matthew says in his Gospel, concerning the coming of Christ, *Mat 24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: Mat 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Mat 24:31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.* "Immediately" after all those afflictions, so where does he put the time of Christ's coming relative to the events? Well, it occurs "after" those days of affliction but we just do not know when that is.

All we know is that the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" go on doing their work. The horsemen are spiritual forces, aspects of Christ's governing of this planet. I remind you that there are four main areas in which God focuses, to bring the world to His presence, to feel His hand, and to cry out for Him. There is

Christ, who goes out to conquer mankind, there is the red horseman, symbolising war, nation rising against nation, there is the black horseman, who governs the supply chain, the staff of life and all things pertaining to it, and finally there is the grey or grisled horse that symbolises death with the grave, hell, following him. They will go on working until God has made an end of man, and when that is we cannot say.

And what of the writer, Luke, the story teller of these events? These events that he wrote about happened before the fall of Jerusalem, and the Gospel letter was completed in about 60 AD, 10 years before the sacking of Jerusalem by Rome. So that when, eventually, Luke got to write these things down, the events described by Jesus, 30 years earlier, had not yet happened, and there was a whole cluster of events that had not happened. We might separate these events from the perspective of the 20th Century, and with the luxury of hindsight and our magic rear view mirror, and we might think that we have sorted them out, but the disciples then had not, and that is why they needed signs.

Did Luke understand the things that he wrote about for us, or was he just collecting information? Did his understanding extend beyond the immediate sphere of his writings, *Luk 1:3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, Luk 1:4 That thou **mightest know the certainty** of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.* Did God equip Luke with a supernatural ability to understand and communicate exactly these things or were there the normal limitations of the time in which he wrote? If he had the ability to understand the things that he wrote about, then he didn't communicate them well, and certainly, the people who lived after the events still remain confused. Or are we trying to see too much in what he wrote, not concentrating on, "*the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.*"

Did Luke write the order of the events in a linear progression, with a time stamp, or did he just gather the sayings of Jesus and put them in his own order? We do not know because we cannot question him, and rather than get into speculation mode, we should just accept that we will only know for certain when God reveals it to us. Are you going to wait for God to reveal it, or will you waste time speculating and theorising?

Jesus gives us a parable to calm us down and take stock of what is going on, *Luk 21:29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; Luk 21:30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. Luk 21:31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.* As the fig tree

grows, it grows in an orderly fashion, and it is not sensible to look for growth shoots in winter. In summer the fig tree puts out shoots and that is how you know that it is summer. So in the same manner when you see these things come to pass you know that the Kingdom of God is near.

But wait a minute, didn't we say that the Kingdom is not an earthly Kingdom (Joh 18:36), that It is not viewed with earthly eyes, but is known with spiritual eyes, *Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, **he cannot see the kingdom of God.*** The Kingdom of God is a reality, it is on earth and heaven, hence it is called the Kingdom of Heaven, but it has no visible presence on earth except in the hearts of the faithful. It is seen by the person who is born from above, and as such is a spiritual kingdom, *Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man **be born of water and of the Spirit,** he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Joh 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and **that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*** Is the Kingdom coming or has it come?

Luk 17:20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Luk 17:21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. Jesus can therefore say of His Kingship, His Kingdom, that, "**the kingdom of God is within you**". If the kingdom is within you, what does that mean? It is in its entirety, the Kingship of Jesus over us, in time and space. Where Jesus is we are, where the Father is the Son is, and we live separately from the world. This kingdom is about the hidden things of life, the internals of life and it has come to us.

So do we look for a future temporal manifestation of The Kingdom, or one much closer, one when Jesus comes into the Heavenly Kingdom, or ushers in His Kingdom, or establishes the rule of His Kingdom, after His resurrection? The closer one seems to fit, and the disciples don't have to wait a long time for it. What about the words which come after these, *Luk 21:33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. Luk 21:32 Verily I say unto you, **This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.***

This too says that the current generation of Jesus' day would not die until these things had been fulfilled. It could not be more explicit, but the question it poses, is what does "all things" refer to? For this event to have occurred within a generation, say 40 years, Christ's coming would now be over and we would be in Glory, all finished and fulfilled. But Luke is clearly not speaking of the final coming of Christ. If he were speaking of the final coming of Christ, then he is mistaken, his Gospel contains factual errors, history has been misinterpreted and

the Bible contains errors. I don't believe that it is in error and I am sure my and our understanding is most likely in error.

One way we can look at the verses is to say that, "all things" refers to the fall of Jerusalem, things that happen close to the time of the disciples and the rest are in a later history. But honestly, there are no grounds that I can see for splitting up the events into, those relating to Jerusalem and those coming upon all nations. The Lord gives us "events" without a horizon and they are all given together. We cannot cherry pick the events that we want and discard the rest as not being relevant. It is no use taking the fall of Jerusalem as a reference point in time either, because it hasn't happened to them yet.

This narrows the range of explanations down, *Luk 21:32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.* I think we have been looking at the time marker, the critical point, as being "this generation", the generation we presume are Luke's generation, the disciple's generation. But look what follows this in Matthew's account, *Mat 24:34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Mat 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. Mat 24:36 **But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. Mat 24:37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.***

What if Jesus is talking about another generation, a generation caught up in the final events of time, the last generation, like Noah's generation, when the suddenness of death came upon them in their ordinary lives and they would die, but some would be spared, "this generation shall not pass away". This seems to make sense of the scriptures, but I am fallible, and only suggest this to you as an explanation.

More to the point these are Jesus words which also have a bearing on the final conclusion to His discourses in the Temple, *Luk 21:33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.* They are the words of Jesus, God breathed scripture, delivered by angels, *Rev 1:20 I will explain the mystery of the seven stars that you saw at my right side and the seven gold lampstands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the lampstands are the seven churches.* CEV. We may not fully understand them, yet, and they remain mysteries, and we should not be in a hurry to get an answer, any answer to plug the hole in our ignorance.

I remember as a very small boy, seeing my father using logarithms when doing calculations for his night school course. He would convert numbers into

logarithms using Log Tables, then add the Logarithms and convert the result back into ordinary numbers using antilogarithms. He could by the uses of logarithms multiply numbers very easily. He also used a slide rule for calculations, which was another way of doing logarithms. Of course many will not know what I am talking about since they have grown up with calculators.

I used to watch my father do his calculations, and I tried to copy him, and I could write down the numbers from the Log Tables, but I didn't understand them, or how to use them, or what I was doing. It was the same with the slide rule, yes, I could slide it up or down, but it made no sense to me. Then one day in my senior school, it all became clear and I was the master of the Log Tables. I had the background of mathematics that enabled me to use them.

Do not be worried that you do not know certain things. God is leading you from the simple truths to more complex ideas. When you are ready, He will show you the answers. But don't expect to get them without effort or study. His word abides, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away*". We don't have to have all the answers, only those that are essential to life in Christ.

188. Take Heed *Luke 21: 33 - 38*

Luk 21:33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. Luk 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Luk 21:35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Luk 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. Luk 21:37 And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives. Luk 21:38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

I have included the last verse of the previous section that we have dealt with into this section, because I think that it is relevant to it, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away*". The words of God outlast any and all of the words of man. They are in this universe, the final words, the last words on all matters of life. You may choose not to believe them, you may think that they are irrelevant to your life, you may think that they are words for a previous generation and so reject them. You may prefer to go through this life without

God's word, and that is what you are up against when we come and are called to account for our lives, the Words of God.

It is like the boast of the Titanic builders, and later the Titan submersible builders that their vessels were unsinkable, but the vessels were only as good as their weakest part. The builders thought they knew better, and took a risk that was not even a calculated risk. The laws of God exist to be found out, and we are guided by these laws in order to preserve our lives, *Lev 18:5 And ye shall observe my statutes and my judgments, by which **the man that doeth them shall live: I am Jehovah.*** Darby. We neglect them or break them in the hope that they do not count, but time and time again the truth will be found that if we break the laws, we shall die. The laws in the natural world are equally the laws, the words of God.

In a like manner the laws governing church life are equally binding in order to live. If we go against God's rules we shall not be building His Church, Christ's Church, we shall be building a Titanic church. The Titanic church may be large, and it may have plenty of fools as passengers, who know nothing about its construction, yet they are willing to join her on her voyage, she may have all the technology and innovation, may be state of the art in comfort and luxury, but it is designed to fail. Noah's boat survived the most cataclysmic storm ever known because it was built according to God's plan, *Gen 6:13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Gen 6:14 Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. Gen 6:15 **And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of:** The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.*

Instead of using God's method, we like to try out new materials, new ideas, so called innovations when building the church, forgetting that it is His Church, forgetting that He is the Head of the Body. Where is the foundation of this Church, where is its keel? It is laid by the builders who lay Christ first, *1Co 3:9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. 1Co 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 1Co 3:11 **For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.***

Of course, they all say that they build on "Christ", but which "Christ"? The Christ of the Apostles or the Christ of their imagination? You will see in the building of the Church, whether it is built by the Apostles or not, *Eph 2:20 **And are built***

upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; Eph 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: Eph 2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

God has told us what to build and we must build it exactly. We do not have much conversation from God, and He has left us with instructions to disciple men and that does not need repeating, *Mat 28:18 And Jesus coming up spoke to them, saying, All power has been given me in heaven and upon earth. Mat 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; Mat 28:20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have enjoined you. And behold, *I* am with you all the days, until the completion of the age. Darby.*

The Apostles of Jesus, the first disciples, proceed to give us the order and organisation of how we conduct ourselves and what our teachings are. These teachings were given within the first years of the expanding church, *Heb 13:7 Don't forget about your leaders who taught you God's message. Remember what kind of lives they lived and try to have faith like theirs. Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ never changes! **He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.** Heb 13:9 Don't be fooled by any kind of strange teachings. It is better to receive strength from God's undeserved kindness than to depend on certain foods. After all, these foods don't really help the people who eat them. CEV.*

Do you see the difference between what the Apostles says and what men do in the Church? Does it bother you or do you say that I am quibbling over words, and that it is not really worth bothering about? Are you a laissez-faire person, live and let live and do anything to keep the peace? It is up to you but you would do well to listen to Jesus words, *Luk 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Luk 21:35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.*

But it doesn't matter what men are saying to you, it is how we respond to those men and how we respond to the pressures put upon us. We cannot hide and say to Jesus, that we are sorry and it was the fault of the men or women that taught us error, *Gen 3:12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* It did not absolve Adam from his personal responsibility. It doesn't matter whether the men teaching were sincere or not, they do not bear our punishment for what we did. WE are responsible, responsible to test the theories of men, responsible to test what they teach us, responsible for what we do in matters of religion, not to just go along with the

herd, assuming that they are right, but we should critically test what is being said.

There was a group of Jews who tested what they were taught, *Act 17:10 That same night the Lord's followers sent Paul and Silas on to Berea, and after they arrived, they went to the Jewish meeting place. Act 17:11 The people in Berea were much nicer than those in Thessalonica, and they gladly accepted the message. Day after day they studied the Scriptures to see if these things were true. Act 17:12 Many of them put their faith in the Lord, including some important Greek women and several men. CEV.*

They didn't just accept the words because the preacher was good, that there was a good atmosphere, that they were trendy or that they liked what he spoke, they put that aside and looked a little closer. They saw the need to test if they were credible. Did the preacher's words match up exactly with what the Scripture said? No match, no credibility. It was like that game that you used to play when you were young, with cards of animals or cards of numbers, which were laid face down, and you turned one over, then another and you had to remember the cards and pair them up. In this case the preacher has half of the cards and the Scripture has the other half of the cards. The Berean's were trying to match the card of the preacher with the cards of the word of God.

The thing is, today, the preacher hardly uses the bible, the Scriptures, when giving his message, and you would be hard pressed to find what he is talking about. That is why you have to take heed, *Luk 21:34 But take heed to yourselves that your hearts not be loaded down with headaches, and drinking, and anxieties of life, and that day come suddenly upon you'. I have made an attempt at translating these verses literally, "But take heed to yourselves lest at any time you should be weighed down in your hearts by dizziness, and intoxication and anxieties of life; and all of a sudden it comes upon you should stand that day. As a snare it comes for it shall come upon everyone being settled upon the face of all the earth. Be awake then at every season! beseeching, that you should be deemed worthy to flee from all the things being about to take place, and to stand before the son of man. "*

The Titanic church is steaming to its final destination and we are fools if we trust any mans word that it is safe to board and go with them on a voyage of luxury to their final destination. The question must be asked, who will be on watch? *Luk 21:36 Be on watch and pray always that you will have the strength to go safely through all those things that will happen and to stand before the Son of Man.* Darby. If you have given over your responsibility to some other person,

put your life in someone else's hands, if the person is not Christ, you are deserving of all that is coming to you, because you neglected the Gospel.

And on this warning, ceases the public ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God, the Messiah, the Hope of Israel. He has said enough, He has said it all, He has described the state of man, and He has confronted man on his erroneous thinking, He has corrected man, He has shown man the way to Heaven and He is about to make that sacrifice that will gain entry into heaven. We have been on a journey with Him and the disciples will soon find out that truth that He told them, *Luk 17:22 And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.*

You don't have to have it repeated, Jesus says it once is enough and you have heard it. You've gone through the theory and practical of the Christian faith, you know what is what, what to do and that is that. Reject Him and His sayings and you will die in your sins, delay and prevaricate and you will likewise die, and that is the message of the Gospel, and if you are too arrogant to acknowledge it, you deserve to die.

It is the end of Jesus public ministry, *Luk 21:37 And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives. Luk 21:38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.*

The Gospel that we have been studying, Luke's Gospel, was written for a purpose, *Luk 1:1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Luk 1:2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; Luk 1:3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, Luk 1:4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.*

We do not know for certain that it was Luke who wrote it, though we deduce from Acts that this person was a close confidante of Paul's, and tradition holds this to be so, although there is no attribution to him. John, likewise is written for a purpose, *Joh 20:30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: Joh 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.* Again, there is no attribution, but the internal evidence suggests that it was John.

Matthew and Mark are more problematical and we have no clear evidence of authorship, or why they were written. You can have plenty of guesses but they are all the speculation of men. It raises a question as to why we need four, so called Gospels anyway. I think we have got a lot of information from Luke's account sufficient to enable us to come into the Kingdom. Why is there built in redundancy, and four accounts? We do not know.

I wonder how much they knew of the other writers and what they had written, and was it shared? The last that we hear of the Apostles all gathered together, was in the upper room at Jerusalem, before Pentecost. After this they just "disappear", go there own ways, presumably taking charge of Jesus words, "Go and preach the Gospel". If they were scattered, then we have the possibility that the Gospel accounts were written independently. That they didn't all come and sit around a table and concoct four versions of the same event, peeking over each other's shoulders, seeing what the others wrote. The Spirit of God moved on each of the writers to give their own accounts of the events in Jesus life.

We are left to puzzle over the authorship. Why didn't they make it clear who they were? Was it necessary to know who wrote it, considering the nature of the person that they were dealing with, God Himself. Was it necessary to put a sinful name above the sacred text? Or was it that they declined attribution so that you would concentrate on the person of Christ?